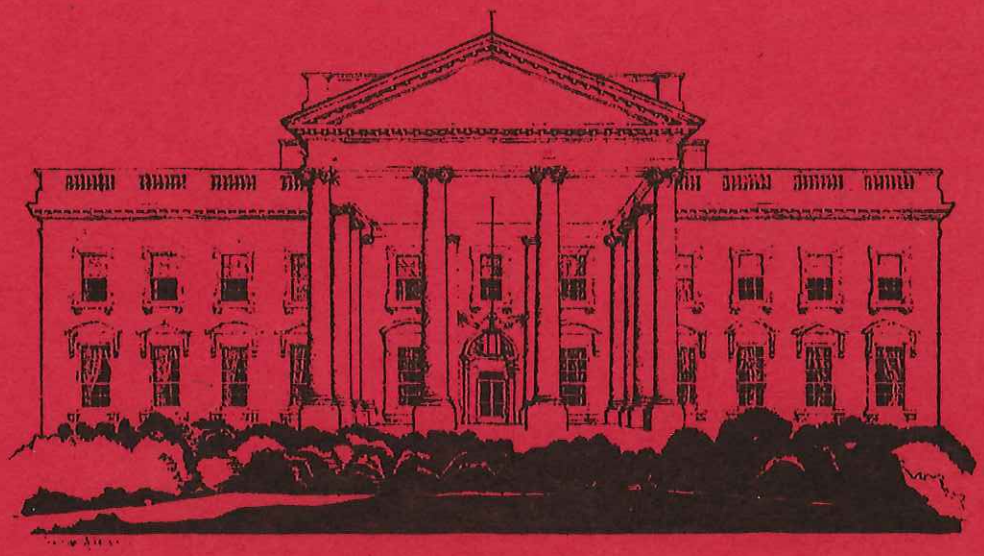
1976
Series of Lectures

Religion in the Lives of American Presidents



The White House, Washington, D.C.

compiled by the Forum Class

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The Forum is grateful to Mr. Everett F. Lomax, former President and longtime member of The Forum and of Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church for suggesting and organizing this series of lectures on RELIGION IN THE LIVES OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENTS.

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INTRODUCTION

With the celebration of the two hundredth year of our nation, it is well to examine the role of our institutions in that history. In line with that belief, the Forum has decided to acquaint itself with the place that religion has held in the lives of the presidents. Anyone venturing into a study of the influence of religion in the lives of America's chief executives may well be disconcerted to discover how little presidential biographers have to say on this subject; and this in spite of the fact that not a few decisions a president will have to make well may be influenced by his religious training and outlook. We must remember that until 1750, the greatest brains in America went into the ministry; from 1750 to 1820 they went into politics; but after 1820 they went into business and industry. It is difficult to say whether this lack of data on the religion of the presidents reflects the accurate portrayal of the low estate of religion in the chief executives' priorities, or in the priorities of the biographers. A third possibility is that the writers have an idea of that which the book-buying public wishes to read about its presidents and religion is not contributory to the making of a best seller. Another explanation is that Americans take for granted that religion of one kind or another is a part of every life and the presidents' experiences in that field are no different from that of the voters'.

Proceeding on this last assumption, a retired Baptist minister interested in religions of the presidents, holds that Americans basically are a religious people. In fact the church, together with the home and the public school are the three fundamental and basic American institutions. Being religious, Americans expect their president to manifest a religious faith. But, except up until 1960, when Roman Catholicism frankly was regarded as an almost insuperable barrier to the White House, public opinion never has demanded of our presidents any specific denominational affiliation, such as in Argentina where only a Roman Catholic can be head of the state. Moreover, when a candidate openly has avowed his intention of running for the office, his advisers take pains to insure that he be photographed arriving at or leaving a church or chapel, preferably with members of his family. General Eisenhower was aware of the public relations importance of a church connection. When he was asked to run for the presidency, he is said to have replied: "That means I'll have to join a church," and he became a Presbyterian.

The thirty-seven men who have served this nation as presidents have been men of faith, and true to the God of their understanding. Without a single exception at one time or another, all have avowed publicly their trust in God. For example, Methodist Rutherford B. Hayes made a practice of holding family worship at the breakfast table. He believed that Bible reading

had a formative influence on the character of his children. For him and the others, the nature of the presidential office with its crushing burdens, the incumbent's lack of first-class training for the position, its perplexing dilemmas, its incredibly great responsibilities, all these bring to our chief executives an overwhelming realization that human resources and human wisdom alone are not sufficient for the task. It compels them to go for strength and guidance to that Higher Power which shapes the destinies of people and of nations. Depending upon the response to the directives from that Higher Power, a nation, through its chief executive, may become a great nation or a good nation.

As one studies the lives of the presidents from the point of view of religion, it would seem as though Providence had conspired to give them religious associations. Several of them had debated seriously entering the Christian ministry. One actually was a preacher when he entered the White House. Three were sons of ministers. Five had married the daughters of clergymen. Two had served as military chaplains without ordination. One had read the Bible through three times before the age of fourteen. Half a dozen had read it at least once from cover to cover, and one resolved to do this annually. One compiled a scholarly selection of the moral teachings of Jesus which was read widely at the time and is found in libraries today. Family worship had familiarized them with great passages of the Bible which remained with them through life, as President Wilson said, "Like the memory of a mother." Of the thirty-seven presidents, ten were Episcopalians, six were Presbyterian, four were Unitarians, four were Methodists - Polk, Grant, Hayes and McKinley; Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Dutch Reformed, and Quakers numbered two presidents each, and the congregationalists and Catholics one apiece. Three listed no denomination, namely, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Andrew Jackson.

JAMES R. MOCK, Director of the Forum
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THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS
WASHINGTON, ADAMS, JEFFERSON AND MADISON

Before we look at that intrepid band of early American presidents whom we will consider, perhaps it would be wise for us to look at the state of religion in Colonial America. After all it was out of the crucible of Colonial religion that our first four presidents were formed. Though many misguided individuals tell us today that everything is wrong with contemporary America and that we ought to look to the past for sustenance and guidance - in other words, to the "good old days" - those who know anything about Colonial America know that it was a time when religious liberty was still an ideal to be achieved rather than a practical reality. Every one of our states at one time or another with the exception of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania had some form of established religion. Indeed, every state had some form of discrimination against non-Protestant minorities. The Church of England was established in the Southern colonies and the Puritan Congregationalists in the New England states. New York for a while had a Dutch Reformed establishment which persecuted Quakers, and Maryland was originally founded as a haven for Catholics from England but eventually it reverted to Protestant control, and in 1689 religious liberty for Catholics was abolished. Jews were treated badly in almost every colony except Pennsylvania though they were able to establish synagogues in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah. We should also remember that even Roger Williams' Rhode Island, founded as a haven for religious dissenters, eventually prohibited Catholics and Jews from holding public office. Pennsylvania was the only colony which on the eve of the Revolution allowed public Catholic worship. Even in Pennsylvania, office holding was restricted to Christians. In almost all states Catholics, Jews and Unitarians were not allowed to hold public office. So, it is not unusual that our early presidents came from the dominant churches.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

George Washington was a Virginia Episcopalian and a country gentleman, and a man of immense talent. He was elected vestryman of Truro Parish in Virginia in 1762 and remained a practicing Episcopalian all of his life. A couple of disputes have occurred, though, about his precise views. Washington regarded religion as essentially a private matter and did not answer questions about his personal religion. As far as we know, he declined to kneel for worship and prayer which is an Episcopalian tradition. Some individuals have interpreted this as a belief

that he wasn't really devout or practicing and that for some reason he refused to give his assent to the faith. Some others have interpreted it merely, however, as an example of a gentryman's pride. Also, there is no proof that he ever received Holy Communion in the Episcopal church. Several ministers who made note of his attendance at their services indicated that, even on Communion Sunday, Washington, along with many other congregants would leave before Communion. It should be remembered, though, that 18th century Anglicanism was very "low church." Communion was usually celebrated only four times a year whereas today it is celebrated every day in the Episcopal church. It may have been that Washington had just not taken any particular interest in sacramental theology and did not wish to partake of the sacraments. There is no indication that his reluctance to receive communion indicates disbelief, though many writers try to show this.

When Washington attended St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia, the rector there felt that Washington was a Deist rather than an orthodox Anglican. Deism was the dominant intellectual pattern of Colonial America. The Deists believed that God created the world, was somehow a ruler and judge of the Universe, but did not participate directly in the affairs of men. They were concerned with religion as a system of ethics and morality and were concerned with the way men lived and their relations to each other. Most Deists also rejected the divinity and deity of Jesus, rather regarding Him as a great prophet and teacher.

Some other aspects of Washington's religious thought need some consideration, however. He was the president who added the phrase, "so help me God," to the presidential oath of office. On the day of his inauguration, April 30, 1789, Washington concluded, "so help me God," and bent down and kissed the Bible. On another occasion, Washington indicated his belief that religion and morality were essential for democratic government. In his farewell address to Congress and the American people, he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports ... and let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion ... reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government."

Washington was also a strong believer in religious liberty. Though he took no part in the move to disestablish the Church of

England in Virginia, as did his colleagues Jefferson and Madison, he once wrote, "Every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the deity according to the dictates of his own conscience." Furthermore, in a treaty with the Barbary States ending the war between the United States and that North African Muslim nation, Washington stipulated, "The government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded upon the Christian religion," which means quite simply that America is a nation which treats all its citizens of whatever religious persuasion, as equals before the law. The government is in no way founded on any particular religion.

Finally, Washington was tolerant for his time. He had personal friends who were Catholics and Jews, one of the latter of whom, Haym Solomon, a Philadelphia financier, helped to finance the Revolution. Many Catholic generals, Lafayette, Rochambeau, Kosciusko, and Pulaski, came to support the American War of Independence. Washington forbade his troops from celebrating the anti-Catholic "Guy Fawkes Day" celebrations on November 5. This rather childish event was to celebrate an alleged Catholic attempt to blow up the British parliament and culminated in the burning of the Pope in effigy. Washington felt that such celebrations were an insult to his Catholic soldiers and generals. Parenthetically one might note that the only country in the world that still celebrates Guy Fawkes Day is - you guessed it - Northern Ireland, and they really mean it there! Washington is a man who regarded religion as one of the essential elements of society but he was not personally involved in religious controversy. As Fuller and Green wrote, "George Washington was Episcopalian by heritage and habit but was not a communicant within his church. He never defined his own religious views beyond affirmation of belief in God and the importance of religion in society. The term Deist applied to him by others appears to be accurate. There is no evidence of strong religious impulses or interests."

JOHN ADAMS

Our second president, John Adams, was a man of great intellect and was a scholar, diplomat and statesman. Adams was born a New England Congregationalist but early developed a detestation for Calvinist orthodoxy. He didn't like emotionalism in religion and didn't like the negative "hell and brimstone" orientation of the Calvinist preachers. During his life he moved toward Unitarianism, although it must be remembered that the early Unitarians were much more conservative by today's

standards. They would be much more like a liberal Methodist or Congregationalist today. Unitarians of that time regarded themselves as Christians and believed in the divinity of Jesus and were much more inclined to traditional Christianity. Adams enjoyed the study of the scriptures. He indicated that he read and studied the scriptures Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings. The rest of the week he read Latin and English authors.

Adams was interested in religion in contrast to Washington and was concerned with some of the central questions of the nature of man and God. He did not believe in the trinity but defined Christianity in this way, "The Christian religion, as I understand it, is the brightness of the glory and the express portrait of the eternal, self-existent, independent, benevolent, all-powerful and all-merciful Creator, Preserver, and Father of the Universe. ... it will last as long as the world. Neither savage nor civilized man could ever have discovered or invented it. Ask me not whether I am a Catholic or Protestant, Calvinist or Arminian. As far as they are Christians, I wish to be a fellow disciple of them all." On another occasion Adams wrote, "If I did not believe in a future state, I should believe in no God."

Adams believed that religion was essential to society. He wrote, "Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company." He felt that Christianity was by far the world's best religion. In replying to Thomas Paine's criticism of Christianity, Adams affirmed, "The Christian religion is, above all the religions that ever prevailed or existed in ancient or modern times, the religion of virtue, equity, and humanity ... ." Adams was unsympathetic to ecclesiastical establishments particularly those of hierarchical and well organized churches. In a letter to Jefferson he once questioned whether Roman Catholicism was ever compatible with Republican institutions; and yet Adams contributed to the building fund of the first Catholic church in Boston. Adams has been called one of our most devout Presidents and one of those most interested in religion. Late in his life Adams wrote, "Knowing that 'except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain,' with further supplications for His favor, to His overruling providence, I commit with humble and fearless confidence my own fate and the future destinies of my country."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Thomas Jefferson, undoubtedly one of the greatest minds in the entire history of mankind, was an authentic genius and scholar and one of the most profound thinkers in the field of religion and ethics. It has been written that Adams and Jefferson were the most actively interested in scholarly religious inquiry of any Presidents. Jefferson was a nominal Episcopalian but early adopted strongly Unitarian views. His views were definitely Deist and he expressed his belief that religion is an ethical system if it is anything. He once wrote, "I have ever thought religion a concern purely between our God and our consciences. ... I have ever judged the religion of others by their lives ... for it is in our lives and not from our words that our religion must be read."

Jefferson was denounced by the preachers of his day as an infidel and a vile atheist who would destroy America. The Puritan preachers in Massachusetts warned their people that they would have to hide their Bibles in their wells if Jefferson were elected President. He had to suffer the constant attacks of his political and religious opponents all during his life time; and yet how did this evil infidel spend his spare time in the White House? Translating the Gospels and writing what is called the Jefferson Bible, what Jefferson himself called "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth." Jefferson went through the four Gospels and attempted to create a chronological harmony of the life and work of Jesus. He rejected the miracles of supernatural elements which he thought had been added to Christianity and instead created an orderly portrait of Jesus and His teachings through His (Jesus') own words. He clipped and pasted up in parallel columns the excerpts from the Bible in English, Greek, Latin and French. Jefferson called the teachings of Jesus, "the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has even been offered to man." Jefferson's summary of Christianity was this: "The doctrines of Jesus are simple and tend to all the happiness of man: 1. That there is only one God and He is all-perfect, 2. That there is a future state of rewards and punishments, 3. That to love God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself is the sum of all religion." Jefferson regarded himself as a Christian because he believed in the ethical teachings of Jesus, "I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus."

Jefferson was profoundly tolerant of the views of others. In 1803 he wrote, "I will never by any word or act bow to the shrine of intolerance or admit a right of inquiry into the

religious opinions of others." We all know his wonderful statement that appears on the Jefferson Memorial, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

Another characteristic of Jefferson's thought was anti-clericalism. He felt that the clergy were dangerous in politics and that their control of government would always lead to a denial of religious and civil liberty to others. He also claimed that Calvinism had added more evils to Christianity than any other single philosophy. But it was Jefferson's contribution to the cause of religious freedom for which we should probably most fondly remember him. Jefferson deeply believed that freedom of conscience ought to be protected by civil law and that there should be no established religion. He drafted the great Virginia statute for religious freedom in 1776, but it was initially rejected by the Virginia House of Delegates. It was through the efforts of his friend James Madison that the bill was finally passed by the legislature seven years later. In it Jefferson said that, "no man shall be compelled to support any religious worship place or ministry whatsoever. ... to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical." In this bill he wrote, "All men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain their opinions in matters of religion."

Jefferson was concerned that religious liberty must be maintained at all costs. In a letter of 1803 he wrote, "It behooves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself, to resist invasions of it in the case of others." He was delighted that religious freedom was finally guaranteed in Virginia. He wrote to his friend Madison on December 16, 1786, " ... we have solved by fair experiment the great and interesting question whether freedom of religion is compatible with or in government and obedience to the laws." Those who supported religious liberty had been accused by others of opening the door to anarchy. Jefferson was convinced, however, that religious liberty would lead to a better government. While he was President he was asked by the Danbury Baptist Association what the First Amendment meant. Jefferson wrote to them on New Year's Day 1802 the following: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with soverign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting establishment of religion or

prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between church and state."

Jefferson adhered to strict separationist views throughout his presidency. He refused to proclaim a national Thanksgiving Day, and after becoming President of the University of Virginia, he refused to appoint a professorship of divinity because he felt that the state should not finance any religious indoctrination. He believed that, "by bringing the denominations together and mixing them with a mass of other students we shall soften their asperities, liberalize and neutralize their prejudices and make the general religion a religion of peace, reason and morality."

JAMES MADISON

Our fourth President was one of the most important figures in the history of religious liberty. A Virginia Episcopalian, he attended the College of New Jersey, now Princeton, where he was influenced by the great Scottish Presbyterian religious theologian John Witherspoon, under whom Madison studied Hebrew and ethics.

As a young man Madison was shocked to see Baptist preachers jailed for preaching the Gospel without the permission of the established church. He early recognized the evils of religious establishments, even when the established church was his own. "Ecclesiastical establishments tend to create ignorance and corruption," he wrote.

Believing that "the right of every man is to liberty" and not merely to toleration, Madison was successful in getting the word "Toleration" in the 1776 Virginia Bill of Rights modified to read "all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience." One scholar has stated that this clause of Madison's asserted "for the first time in any body of fundamental law, a natural right which had not previously been recognized as such by political bodies in the Christian world." After the American Revolution, Patrick Henry and other legislators proposed a bill to require all Virginia taxpayers to support "teachers of the Christian religion."

Madison saw the dangers in this proposal when he wrote, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties . . . ." Madison as a member of the House of Delegates of Virginia drew up "The Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments," which has remained for two

centuries one of the most explicit warnings against church-state entanglement. Madison wrote "we hold it for fundamental and undeniable truths that religion, or the duty which we owe our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and a conviction, not by force or violence. The religion, then, of every man must be left to the conviction of conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate." Madison warned that "The same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all the religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians in exclusion of all other sects, ..." He also used historical reasons to strengthen his argument. He pointed out that "torrents of blood have been spilled in the Old World in consequence of vain attempts of the secular arm to extinguish religious discord by proscribing all differences in religious opinion." He affirmed that ecclesiastical establishments "instead of maintaining the purity and the efficacy of religion," actually led to "ignorance, servility, superstition, bigotry and persecution."

One of Madison's biographers expressed the significance of this event when he wrote, "this was indeed his great contribution to the cause of religious liberty - that he looked beyond the seemingly trivial levy in the aid of religious teachers, and saw its ultimate consequence in the denial of liberty and imposition of clerical control upon the state."

Madison was responsible for pushing Jefferson's magnificent Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom through the Virginia House of Delegates, seven years after it was originally proposed. He was the primary architect of the First Amendment of the Federal Bill of Rights, delivering an eloquent address before Congress on June 8, 1789, in support of religious liberty. (As a member of the Continental Congress in 1785, Madison also opposed a committee plan to designate one section of federal land in each township of the Northwest Territory for a church.)

As President he was consistent in his advocacy of religious freedom. He opposed a Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, a religious question in the census, and opposed a publicly financed chaplaincy for Congress. Similarly, he vetoed proposals to incorporate the Episcopal church in the District of Columbia and the granting of federal land in Mississippi territory to a Baptist congregation.

Here is a statement from Madison's later years which indicates some of his religious sentiments: "The source to which I

look is ... that Almighty Being whose power regulates the destiny of nations, whose blessings have been so conspicuously dispensed to this rising Republic, and to whom we are bound to address our devout gratitude for the past, as well as our fervent supplication and best hopes for the future."

Anson Phelps Stokes' summation of the achievement of Madison is an appropriate conclusion to this portrait: "Among leaders in America Roger Williams and William Penn were pathmakers in darker days, and Jefferson may have had more intuitive flashes of genius in dealing with the subject; but for logical and consistent development of the constitutional ideal of religious freedom, Madison still ranks in many ways as supreme among our statesmen."

Presented by Mr. Albert J. Menendez, Author, and Assistant Editor of Church and State Magazine, published by Americans United.

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS

MONROE, J.Q. ADAMS, JACKSON, VAN BUREN

We have examined the Religions of the first four Presidents. We concluded that they were men of immense talent and ability and that the new nation was indeed fortunate to have such outstanding leadership during its formative years. We discovered that two of the four Presidents were intensely interested in religion and that all four had reasonably distinct and discernible religious views. They were either Episcopalian or Unitarian and all at one time or another attended Episcopal services. They were all believers in religious liberty and the newly-instituted principle of separation of church and state. Let us now look at their successors.

JAMES MONROE

James Monroe was the fourth Virginian to become President, and it was logical that he would follow in the footsteps of his friends Jefferson and Madison. When we reach Monroe, however, we reach an individual about whose religion we know little. He was an Episcopalian and was baptized, married and buried within the Episcopal Church. There is little, however, to indicate his personal religious sentiments. A paper in the archives of St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, noted that President Monroe "agreed with Jefferson that religion is a matter between our Maker and ourselves." Monroe attended the College of William and Mary, served in the Virginia legislature, was governor of Virginia and was also minister to France and England, as well as Secretary of State under Madison. He was President during a fortunate period of American history known as the "Era of Good Feelings." It was a time when the politcal divisions of the past had almost vanished and the nation was bent on creating a harmonious and prosperous society. We had just defeated Britain for the second time in the War of 1812 and there was a great feeling of security in the new Republic. Monroe basked in the affection of the people and he was elected almost unanimously. Monroe was probably best known for the "Monroe Doctrine" which, though written mostly by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, is considered Monroe's contribution to American diplomatic history. In it Monroe warned the European nations to stay out of the affairs of the Western Hemisphere.

One of Monroe's few religious statements occurs in his second annual message to Congress: "When we view the blessings with which our Country has been favored, those which we now enjoy, and the means which we possess of handing them down unimpaired to our latest posterity, our attention is irresistibly drawn to the source from whence they flow. Let us, then, unite in offering our most grateful acknowledgements for these blessings to the Divine Author of All Good."

Monroe's curious use of the words, "Divine Author of All Good," to refer to God seems to pre-date Christian Science or Unity. It is not a strictly orthodox Christian statement and has baffled many students of religion

and the Presidency. On an earlier occasion, as he entered the White House, Monroe wrote, "I enter on the trust to which I have been called...but my fervent prayer is to the Almighty that He will be graciously pleased to continue to us that protection which He has already so conspicuously displayed in our favor."

After leaving the White House, Monroe became a Regent at the University of Virginia, but eventually had serious financial reverses and had to sell his estate at Ashlawn and move to his daughter's home in New York City. He died on the Fourth of July, 1831, and was buried at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, his funeral being conducted by the Bishop of that city.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

John Quincy Adams, the son of the second President, John Adams, was called "Old Man Eloquent" because of his articulate urbanity. He was a diplomat to several European countries, United States Senator, and Secretary of State under Monroe. He was elected President in the disputed election of 1824 in which he actually ran second in both electoral votes and popular votes to Andrew Jackson. A deal was cooked up in the House of Representatives between Adams and Henry Clay, one of the other defeated candidates, and Adams won the Presidency. He rewarded Clay with the position of Secretary of State. It is unfortunate that a man as honorable as Adams would thus enter the Presidency under a cloud of suspicion.

Adams, like his father, moved from Congregationalist orthodoxy to a moderate form of Unitarianism. He would be considered a conservative Unitarian by today's standards, and it is doubtful that Adams ever moved beyond the Puritan conscience in some aspects of his life. He was a hard taskmaster and was continually critical of his shortcomings. He was very interested in the Bible. In one of his diaries he noted, "I have made it a practice for several years to read the Bible through in the course of every year. I usually devote to this reading the first hour after I rise every morning....My rule is to read five chapters each morning." When he was President, his diary revealed that he had cut this reading down to three chapters in the Bible with a good commentary. He frequently wrote letters to his son on the Bible and its teachings, and a volume of these letters was published after his death.

Like other early Presidents, however, Adams frequently attended the Episcopal Church. On July 26, 1797, his diary matter-of-factly noted that on that day he was married at the Church of the Parish of All Hallows in London. Adams was married in the Church of England and was our first President to be married abroad. (Theodore Roosevelt's second marriage also occurred in London.)

One writer notes: "Religious faith was the foundation of his character, the source of his energy of conscience and conviction...." In one of Adams' diaries he noted, "Religious sentiments become from day to day more constantly habitual to my mind." His opposition to slavery arose primarily from his religious views. He called slavery "that outrage upon the goodness of God." While in Washington, he did not attend church regularly, because there was no Unitarian or, as he called it, "Independent Congregational" church to attend. He was a man of great character and integrity. He was essentially a man without a party, because he considered himself an Independent, politically. He broke with his Massachusetts constituents over the Embargo Bill of President Jefferson in Congress. Adams favored the bill and voted for it though he realized it might end his political career. John F. Kennedy, in his PROFILES IN COURAGE, hailed Adams' decision as one of the most courageous in American history. Adams was denied his re-election to the U. S. Senate because of this, but the voters evidently liked him and he carried his State handily twice in the Presidential election.

Unlike most former Presidents, Adams did not just fade away after being defeated for re-election by Andrew Jackson. He decided it would be a great honor to seek a seat in the United States House of Representatives. He did so successfully and held the seat for eighteen years, dying on the floor of the House in his 81st year. He suffered a stroke at his desk in the chamber and died a few moments later in the Speaker's Room. Perhaps we can best remember Adams by something he wrote shortly before he left the White House. He was disappointed in defeat, but not bitter. He wrote, "Before I end my letter, I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

ANDREW JACKSON

Andrew Jackson was a different kind of President from what we had previously expected. He was the first common man in the White House, the first one from other than the old line thirteen colonies. Though he had been born in Waxhaw, South Carolina, he spent a great deal of his life in Tennessee and was considered a Tennesseean. Jackson's parents came from Scotch-Irish stock from Northern Ireland and he was reared a Presbyterian. However, we know almost nothing about his early religious views. Indeed, we know little until he left the White House. He was a self-educated man and became a lawyer in Tennessee. Though he never attended college, he studied law on his own and thus received a law degree. He was involved in writing the Tennessee Constitution and here his belief in religious tolerance was manifest. He attempted unsuccessfully to exclude from the constitution a requirement that all state officials profess belief in God, in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. Though Jackson may have believed all these, he felt it was not the function of the

government to require all public servants to subscribe to any theological doctrine. He was defeated in this, but it shows his tolerant spirit. He represented Tennessee in Congress, but then returned to Tennessee to become a circuit-riding judge and eventually a military figure.

He was well-known for his military exploits in the War of 1812, and was governor of the Florida Territory. He was also involved in a duel and killed one man, because the man had slandered his wife, Rachel.

Jackson's relationship to his wife, Rachel, is important for understanding his whole character. He fell in love with her in 1790 in Nashville and they were married in 1791. However, she had failed to obtain an official decree of divorce from her first husband, and eventually charges of adultery and bigamy were labeled against the couple. They were innocent victims of a sluggish legal system in a time when communications were slow. They were forced to remarry in 1794, but the whispering surrounding the situation would plague Jackson in his political career for the rest of his life. Rachel was a devout Presbyterian and Jackson attended Presbyterian worship all during their marriage. He also indicated late in his life that for 35 years before becoming President, it had been his custom to read three chapters of the Bible every day. He appears to have been conventionally religious, but never joined the Presbyterian Church until after leaving the White House.

He defeated President John Quincy Adams in the 1828 election, but a tragedy was soon to occur. His beloved wife of 37 years suddenly became ill in December and died. Jackson wept bitterly and never left her side until the funeral. He was seen for days afterward wandering, weeping, in the graveyard and people felt that he had lost his reason. Jackson was bitter that his political enemies had again dragged up the divorce problem of 35 years before, and he said that he could never forgive those who slandered his wife; only God could do that. Rachel was buried in the gown that she had planned to wear to the inaugural ball. The ceremonies for the inauguration were subdued, except for the unexpected uproar of 20,000 Jackson supporters who virtually tore the White House apart. Jackson, himself, participated not at all in the ceremonies.

One event during Jackson's Presidency indicated his strong commitment to the complete separation of religion and government. He refused to proclaim a national day of fasting and prayer, observing that "I could not do otherwise without transcending the limits prescribed by the Constitution for the President and without feeling that I might in some degree disturb the security which religion nowadays enjoys in this country in its complete separation from the political concerns of the general government."

After he left the White House, Jackson finally joined the Presbyterian Church by formal public confession of faith. He mentioned the fact that he had refused to join the church while President, because it would be misconstrued as a political act. On his death-bed, he told his children, "Do not cry. We shall all meet again in Heaven." His preamble to his will contains a very traditional doctrinal position. He said, "First, I bequeath my body to the dust whence it comes, and my soul to God who gave it, hoping for happy immortality through the atoning merits of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world."

MARTIN VAN BUREN

Martin Van Buren was a Democrat, a native of New York, and the first President of the Dutch Reformed faith. He was also the first professional politician to become President and the first citizen of the United States. (Previous Presidents had been born in British Colonial North America.) His religion was considered conventional. Fuller and Green wrote, "Acceptance of this faith was part of the pattern of Van Buren's life and he was known always as a good churchman, though he never showed a deep interest in theological matters. His religion was a thread in the web of his life, and the means by which the great solemnities of life were marked." He faithfully attended the Dutch Reformed services and married into that faith, but little is known about his personal theological sentiments.

He was called, "The Little Magician of Kinderhook," because he was the most successful politician in the Dutch counties of the Hudson River Valley of New York. He was governor of New York, and had a political machine known as the "Albany Regency." He became Secretary of State and also minister to London, at one time. He was Andrew Jackson's second Vice President and then won a narrow victory in the 1836 election. His administration is regarded as somewhat undistinguished and he was defeated for re-election in 1840. He was somewhat ostentatious in his love of fine living and when he returned from England, he brought with him a gold coach. He loved to ride the coach through the streets of Washington and his son also enjoyed British nobility and frequently participated in fashionable activities. Cartoonists of the day used to make fun of "King Van Buren and Prince John in the royal coach."

There was no Dutch Reformed church in Washington, so Van Buren was a regular worshipper at St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square, where he had his own pew. He retired from the White House and became, once again, a simple country lawyer. He again sought the Presidency on a minor party ticket, the "Free Soil" ticket in 1848, but was unsuccessful.

Though a Democract, he supported the Civil War policies of Abraham Lincoln. When Van Buren died in 1862, it was his wish that a very simple funeral service be held for him. The only hymn sung was his favorite, "O God our Help in Ages Past." The funeral service was conducted jointly by the Dutch Reformed pastor and the Episcopal Bishop from Pennsylvania.

Presented by Mr. Albert J. Menendez, Author, and Assistant Editor of CHURCH AND STATE Magazine, published by Americans United.

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, TYLER, POLK, TAYLOR

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

Was born in Berkeley, Va., on February 9, 1773.
His father, Benjamin Harrison, was a signer of the Dec. of Independence.
His grandson, Benjamin Harrison, became President of the United States.
Attended Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Philadelphia.
Joined the Army and engaged in battles against the Indians and their British Allies in the Northwest Territory (new Ohio and Indiana).
Won victories at Tippecanoe Creek, a tributary of the Wabash, in 1811, and at the Battle of the Thames in 1813.
Turned to politics and served as U.S. Representative, Governor of the Indian Territory, U.S. Senator, and Minister to Columbia.
Was "Available" as a Whig candidate for the Presidency in 1840.
The campaign slogan was "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too."
Delivered the longest Presidential Inaugural Address on March 4, 1841.
Developed pneumonia, and died one month later on April 4, 1841, at the age of 68.
Our first President to die in office.
Was buried in North Bend, Ohio.

Little is known about his religious convictions. He was born into the Episcopal heritage of his Virginia family; but, if baptized, apparently was never confirmed. Religion is scarcely mentioned in the records of his life. (Fuller and Green, p.73)

When politicians once called at his North Bend farm, near Cincinnati, on business on a Sunday, Harrison refused to talk with them, saying, "I have too much respect for the religion of my wife to encourage the violation of the Sabbath." It could be the remark of a man with a sense of humor, though there is little other indication that he had one. It may simply reflect a man who kept his religion in his wife's name. (Fuller and Green, pp. 73-74)

In Pittsburgh, when he was President-elect, newspapers reported that he was seen in his hotel room reading the Bible. He said it had been his practice for twenty years; "At first...a matter of duty...it has now become a pleasure." (Fuller and Green, p.74)

There had been a curious premonitory note. On January 26, in Cincinnati, about to start to Washington, he finished a speech with words that faintly anticipate Lincoln's farewell address in Springfield, Illinois, in 1861: "Perhaps this may be the last time I may have the pleasure of speaking to you on earth or seeing you. I will bid you farewell. If forever, fare thee well." (Fuller and Green, pp.75-76)

As he lay dying, Harrison asked that the 103rd Psalm be read to him; a small clue that he knew the Bible, which should be so in his time and background. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

The rest of the scanty record is a curious testimony that was offered at his funeral - in the East Room at the White House. John Quincy Adams described it: ...the Rev. Mr. Hawley, Rector of St. John's Church, read the Episcopal funeral service, with a very brief additional statement of two facts. The first, that the day after General Harrison entered the President's house, he walked out into the city and purchased a Bible and Prayer Book, both of which were on the table, and were exhibited to the assembled auditory by the officiating divine, who said that it had been the daily habit of the late President to commence the day by reading in that Bible. The other fact was, that he had expressed his regret at not having joined in full communion with the Church, and that it was his intention to have done so at the ensuing Easter-day; next Sunday. (Fuller and Green, p.76)

He was a regular Church-goer and always occupied Pew 45 in St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington. (Bonnell, p.71)

JOHN TYLER

Was born in Greenway, near Williamsburg, Virginia, on March 29, 1790.
Attended College of William and Mary in Virginia.
Studied law under his father, Judge John Tyler, and entered politics.
Served as Governor of Virginia, U.S. Representative, and U.S. Senator.
Was more of a Democrat than Whig, but became a running-mate of William Henry Harrison in 1840. Elected on the slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too." He was the first Vice President to succeed to the Presidency on the death of Harrison. There was a question as to whether he should be designated as "Vice President Acting as President" or as "President." Tyler took the oath of office as President, and this precedent has been followed ever since.
Reorganized the Navy Department in 1842.
Concluded the Webster-Ashburton Treaty with England, settling the Northeastern Boundary dispute between the United States and Canada.
Following his Presidency he sought to bring about a compromise between the North and South on the slavery issue. Failing in this, he favored the secession of Virginia from the Union.
He was elected to the Confederate House of Representatives, but died on January 18, 1862, before taking his seat. He was buried in Richmond, Virginia.

The Episcopal Church was part of his traditional heritage, and the great solemnities of his life were all observed in its context. There is no testimony in his own words about his religious views.

There is implied testimony in the facts of his class, tradition, and habits of worship and general behavior. He showed a broad-ranging knowledge of Scripture, not only in his public addresses, but far more significantly, in his private letters. (Fuller and Green, p. 78)

Henry A. Wise, sometime Governor of Virginia, a close friend as well as political associate, though much more of a southern extremist than Tyler, said of him: "He was a firm believer in the atonement of the son of God, and in the efficacy of his blood to wash away every stain of mortal sin. He was by faith and heirship a member of the Episcopal Church, and never doubted divine revelation." There is no corroboration of this positive assertion from Tyler himself, or any of his family; but, also there is no contradiction. It seems quite plausible in the context of Tyler's life. The Virginia tradition of personal reticence could well account for the silence of the Tylers. (Fuller and Green, p. 78)

One of his contemporaries wrote that Tyler, "with all men, high or low...was all that could be asked; approachable, courteous, always willing to do a kindly action, or speak a kindly word." (Fuller and Green, p.80)

His personality is seen in the epitaph he wrote for the grave of his horse: "Here lies the body of my good horse, 'The General.' For twenty years he bore me around the circuit of my practice, and in all that time he never made a blunder. Would that his master could say the same! John Tyler." (Fuller and Green, p. 80)

JAMES KNOX POLK

He was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, of Scotch-Irish ancestry, on November 2, 1795. When young, the family moved westward into Tennessee.

The family followed the Presbyterian faith, but young Polk was not baptized as a baby because of his father's unwillingness to make a "confession of faith."

He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he found a rigorous Presbyterian indoctrination.

He studied law and entered politics. He became a U.S. Representative in 1825, and later served as Speaker of the House. Somewhat later, he became the Governor of Tennessee. He was a friend of Andrew Jackson.

Polk became a "dark horse" candidate for President as a Democrat in 1844, and was elected on the slogan, "Fifty-four forty or fight." He was a hard worker as President, and kept a detailed diary. The Naval Academy was established in 1845. The Mexican War was fought, giving us the Southwest area and all of California, by conquest and purchase.

The Oregon Question was settled by the Northwest Treaty with England in 1846, making the boudary between the United States and Canada at the 49th Parallel, giving the United States the area north of California.

He died at Nashville, Tennessee, on June 15, 1849, and was buried there.

In 1824, Polk married Sarah Childress, as devout a Presbyterian as was his mother. They purchased a pew in the Presbyterian church, and Polk accompanied her to its services regularly. In August, 1833, he attended a Methodist camp meeting, where the preacher was twenty-six year-old John B. McFerrin, later Methodist Bishop of Tennessee. McFerrin whipped up such a pitch of fervor, as to win six thousand converts in a year in the Tennessee region. (Fuller and Green, p. 83)

The lasting impression of that experience is seen in Polk's White House diary. "Sunday, 2nd November, 1845. Attended the Methodist church (called the Foundry Church today), in company with my private secretary, James Knox Walker. It was an inclement day, there being rain from an early hour in the morning; and Mrs. Polk and the ladies of my household did not attend church today. Mrs. Polk being a member of the Presbyterian Church, I generally attend that church with her, though my opinions and predilections are in favor of the Methodist Church." It was his birthday, and the text of the sermon "awakened the reflection that I had lived fifty years, and that before fifty years more would expire, I would be sleeping with the generations which have gone before me. I thought of the vanity of this world's honors; how little they would profit me half a century hence, and that it was time for me to be putting my house in order." (Fuller and Green, pp. 83-84).

One day in 1846, a senator came urging the President to stop the westward trek of the Mormons from Illinois. Polk showed himself as keen a defender of religious liberty, as any of his predecessors, and "informed him that as President of the United States, I possessed no power to prevent or check their emigration; that the right of emigration or expatriation was one which any citizen possessed. I told him that I could not interfere with them on the ground of their religious faith, however absurd it might be considered to be; that if I could interfere with the Mormons, I could with the Baptists, or any other religious sect; and that by the Constitution any citizen had a right to adopt his own religious faith." (Fuller and Green, p.84)

Sarah Polk followed strict Presbyterian teachings. The White House observed the Sabbath strictly. Polk declined to do any business of state on a Sunday, unless it were crucial. He noted, once, after their return from church, that the French minister called. "As it is contrary to our fixed rule to receive company on the Sabbath the servant was directed to ask him to excuse us." (Fuller and Green, p. 85)

On his fifty-third birthday, November 2, 1848, he wrote in his diary, "In four months I shall retire from public life forever...I have been highly honored by my fellow-men and have filled the highest station on earth, but I will soon go the way of all earth. I pray God to prepare me to meet the great event." (Fuller and Green, p. 85)

March 4, 1849, was a Sunday, causing the inauguration of Taylor to be held on Monday, the 5th. The Polks went to the Presbyterian church (First Presbyterian) as usual, and afterward many members pressed good-byes upon them. He noted, "We had attended worship regularly and with few exceptions almost every Sabbath during the term of my Presidency, and the congregation today seemed to realize...that in all probability we should never worship with them again." (Fuller and Green, p. 86)

The Polks made a long, round-about trip back to their home in Tennessee. Polk died in Nashville, four months after completing his term of office. On June 9, 1849, less than a week before his death, he was baptized and received into the Methodist Church by the same Reverend John McFerrin, whose preaching had so moved him in 1833. (Fuller and Green, p.86)

ZACHARY TAYLOR

Taylor was born in Orange County, Virginia, November 24, 1784.
The family moved soon afterward to Kentucky. Taylor's whole career was military. He served under William Henry Harrison in the Northwest Territory in the War of 1812.
He also served in the Seminole War in Florida, and became known as "Old Rough and Ready."
He became a military hero in the Mexican War with an outstanding victory at the Battle of Buena Vista in 1847.
He was "available" as a military hero for the Presidency in 1848, and was elected as the Whig candidate. Taylor was not inaugurated on Sunday, March 4, 1849, but took the oath of office the next day.

The retiring President, Polk, was amazed to hear Taylor say "that California and Oregon were too distant to become members of the Union, and that it would be better for them to form an independent government for themselves." Polk added, in a later comment, "General Taylor is, I have no doubt, a well-meaning old man. He is, however, uneducated, exceedingly ignorant of public affairs, and, I should judge, of very ordinary capacity. He will be in the hands of others, and must rely wholly upon his cabinet to administer the government." (Fuller and Green, p.88)

Taylor served as President for sixteen months. He attended the laying of the Corner Stone of the Washington Monument on July 4, 1850. He became ill of "cholera morbus" and died on July 9, 1850. He was buried in Jefferson County, Kentucky.

Commonly, but misleadingly listed as an Episcopalian, Taylor belonged to no church and never made any recorded profession of faith. More so than with Harrison, his religion was in his wife's name during his forty years of married life. Margaret Smith Taylor was a devout Episcopalian. Whenever she was in residence with him at forts or other military stations, she organized religious services. It has been said that no more religious woman had ever been First Lady. She was active in church matters in spite of frail health, but delegated the duties of White House hostess to her youngest daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Bliss. It is from Betty Bliss that we have the only family testimony about Taylor's religious life. She said, "He was a constant reader of the Bible and practiced all its precepts, acknowledging his responsibility to God." As President, Taylor did as he had generally done when not afield on campaigns; attended church with his wife - St. John's, when in Washington. His churchgoing appears to have been much more a concession to his wife than to public opinion or political expediency, neither of which seemed to matter much more to him than religion. (Fuller and Green, pp. 87-88)

Taylor's last words were: "God knows that I have endeavored to fulfill what I have conceived to be my honest duty." (Bonnell, p.89)

Presented by Dr. Nelson M. Blake, Professor Emeritus, History and Political Science, University of Baltimore; Archivist, the National Archives; Teacher of the Vaughn Bible Class, Calvary Baptist Church; President of the Organized Bible Class Association

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS FILLMORE, PIERCE, BUCHANAN, LINCOLN

MILLARD FILLMORE

Millard Fillmore was the second President-by-succession, stepping into the office on July 10, 1850, after the sudden death of President Zachary Taylor. In his rise from a log cabin to the White House, Millard Fillmore demonstrated that through methodical industry and some competence an uninspiring man could make the American dream come true.

Most of his adult life he was Unitarian; there is little direct testimony about his religious views, but some of the aspects of his political career reflect his attitudes.

Born in the Finger Lakes country in the western part of the State of New York on January 7, 1800, Fillmore as a youth endured the privations of a frontier life. He attended one-room schools, worked on his father's farm and fell in love with the redheaded school teacher, Abigail Power, who later became his wife.

He was self-taught in law and was admitted to the bar in 1823. He became a protege and long time associate of one of the Whig political bosses, Thurlow Weed. Along the way he was in the State Legislature, and then for eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives.

His family had some tenuous Methodist ties - a cousin became a minister - but church going and Bible reading were not the habit in his childhood. It was unlikely that he was ever baptized. His wife, Abigail, was the daughter of a Baptist minister who died in her infancy, and she did not seem to have any strong Baptist ties. Millard and Abigail were married by an Episcopalian minister, but not in the church. Soon after their marriage, they became charter members of the first Unitarian Society of Buffalo, apparently because they looked upon it as the intellectually progressive group than for theological considerations.

There was a conspicuous absence of biblical quotations and allusions in his speeches in an era when they were immensely fashionable, whether a man was religious or not.

Fillmore tried for the Whig Vice-Presidential nomination in 1844, but did not attain it. Instead he ran for Governor of New York, losing the election and blaming his defeat on the "abolitionists and foreign Catholics."

The first of several disagreements that ultimately alienated him from Thurlow Weed, and from the State's most prominent political figure, William H. Seward, involved a Roman Catholic request for a share of

public school funds for support of parochial schools. On this issue, still a hot one in New York State politics today, Seward was inclined to yield. Fillmore, in opposing it, was on sound Constitutional grounds, but other developments in his career indicate that a personal anti-Catholic feeling was as strong a motive for him to oppose it as was Constitutional grounds.

His nomination for Vice President on the Whig ticket in 1848 was a political compromise. The Clay faction, angry at Zachary Taylor's nomination for President, refused to accept Abbott Lawrence, Massachusetts cotton-mill owner, for the nomination for Vice President, because they would not "have cotton at both ends of the ticket."

It is not easy to appraise Fillmore's partial term of President for the 2 years and 236 days after Taylor's death. He wanted to preserve the Union. To that end he supported a series of compromise measures on slavery in 1850 in Congress, and signed them into law after they were passed by Congress.

Some of the more militant northern Whigs remained irreconcilable, refused to forgive him and helped to deprive him of receiving the Whig Party nomination for President in 1852.

Fillmore's retirement from the Presidency of the United States was saddened by the death of his wife, Abigail, twenty-six days after they left the White House. Already frail, she had caught pneumonia from exposure to the raw, wet wind and slushy snow at Franklin Pierce's Inauguration.

Fillmore had wanted to preserve the Union and for that reason had supported the Compromise of 1850; but within a few years it was apparent that although the Compromise of 1850 had been intended to settle the slavery controversy, it served rather as an uneasy sectional truce.

As the Whig Party disintegrated in the 1850's, Fillmore refused to join the Republican Party but, instead, in 1856 accepted the nomination for President of the Know Nothing or American Party. This party had begun as a network of secret societies whose members if questioned about their activities, always said, "I know nothing." Fillmore only carried the State of Maryland in this election for the Presidency of the United States.

Throughout the Civil War he opposed President Lincoln. To be just to him, Fillmore's aim was always conciliation rather than coercion. In that spirit, he later supported the Reconstruction Program of President Andrew Johnson against the harsh attitudes of the Radical Republicans toward the conquered South.

Soon after the Civil War, he ended his membership in the Unitarian Church, because of the Abolition fervor of the majority of the members, who were intolerant of his compromises with slavery. He then attended

the Baptist Church with his second wife, whom he married in 1858, and occasionally went to Episcopal services. He died on March 8, 1874. No Unitarian took part in his funeral, in which a Baptist, an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian shared the ceremonies.

FRANKLIN PIERCE

Franklin Pierce became President at a time of apparent tranquility. The United States, by virtue of the Compromise of 1850, seemed to have weathered its sectional storm. By pursuing the recommendations of southern advisers, Pierce - a New Englander - hoped to prevent still another outbreak of that storm. But his policies, far from preserving calm, hastened the disruption of the Union.

Born in Hillsborough, New Hampshire in 1804, Pierce attended Bowdoin College in Maine. After graduation he studied law, and then entered politics. His father, Benjamin, had been a soldier in the Revolution, and later was a Brigadier General of the New Hampshire militia. He was also once Governor of New Hampshire, but left politics and became a farmer and tavern keeper.

Franklin Pierce was one of the most pathetically unhappy of all of our Presidents. A large part of that unhappiness was linked with a neurotic anxiety about religious commitment, of a kind often encountered in Puritan-stamped New England.

Pierce's wrestlings of spirit began at Bowdoin College. The Bowdoin rules were strict - "Students must be in their rooms Saturday and Sunday evenings and abstain from diversions of every kind. They who profane the Sabbath by unnecessary business, visiting or receiving visits, or by walking abroad, or by any amusement, or in other ways, may be admonished or suspended."

Also they might not eat or drink in taverns (though Pierce was the son of a tavernkeeper), attend the theater of "idle shows" or play cards or billiards or any game for money. They were warned against "loud and disorderly singing...shouting or clapping of hands...or Bacchanalian conduct."

More significant than any of his other friends' impact upon Pierce's character was an intimate friend and roommate, Zenas Caldwell, whom Pierce described as "one of the most consistent followers of the Blessed Redeemer" that he ever knew.

Caldwell and Pierce prayed together every night on their knees; however, Pierce never made any open or inward confession of faith. He confessed after graduation that he had not been reborn although he thought of religion a great deal. His failure to do so seemed to haunt him.

At the age of 24 he was elected to the New Hampshire Legislature; two years later he became its Speaker. During the 1830's he went to Washington, D.C., first as a U.S. Representative and then as a Senator.

During his service as a U.S. Congressman in 1839, separated from his family, lonely and in turbulent political waters, he wrote to his law partner: "I have dwelt somewhat more this winter upon the truths of divine revelation than usual and perhaps have struggled somewhat harder to think and act in conformity with the precepts and commands of the New Testament than ever before." He further said that he believed the Christian doctrines, but strain as he would, could attain no comforting conviction of his own salvation.

In 1834 he married Jane Appleton at which time he was twenty-nine and their marriage lasted twenty-nine years until her death. She was the daughter of a Congregational minister, who had once been the President of the Bowdoin College. Her religious fervor interacted with his struggle for belief with unfortunate effects in time to come. They had three sons: Franklin, Jr. died three days after his birth and Frank Robert died at four years, of typhus.

When he was President-elect, fortune played its nastiest trick. The Pierces and their remaining son, Benjamin, age twelve, were traveling by train near Andover, Massachusetts on January 6, 1853, when there was a bad wreck. The parents were somewhat injured but their son Benjamin was killed. A harrowing morbid suffering set in.

It was a further extension of the cruel, Puritan-bred notion of a God snatching away the children to punish the parents for their sins. Pierce felt that his persistent failure to attain a state of grace was the sin for which he was punished. Mrs. Pierce, as if in a grotesque effort to lift that load, suggested that Benjamin was taken so that her husband Franklin, should have no distraction from his duties as President - an involuntary Isaac sacrificed to the father's public responsibilities.

Mrs. Pierce wore black during her whole tenure in the White House and had one of her in-laws serve as White House hostess in her stead.

In the White House, Pierce adhered to a most strict observance of the Sabbath, not even reading mail. He read family prayers every morning with the servants present. He worshipped at the old 4½ Street Church, where Reverend Byron Sunderland preached, and sometimes he attended the Presbyterian Church on 9th Street.

Pierce, both in and out of office was active in the temperance movement, because alcohol was a besetting temptation to him and probably a source of his persistent conviction of guilt. After his wife's death, his will collapsed and he relied heavily on drink. His health declined swiftly.

The slavery question tormented him in office and when he was out of office, he was a sad spectator as the nation was rent in a war because of it. The slavery question was so greatly the obsession of his wife's Congregational Church that he could not endure its constant hammering on the theme.

When she was gone, he was baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Pierce had fled to his home church for comfort. He wrote to a friend, soon afterward: "I can repeat with more or less comfort, Thou art my God. My time is in Thy hand." He died on October 8, 1869. His memory remains - as sad and futile a figure as we shall meet of those who have served as our Presidents.

JAMES BUCHANAN

Tall, stately, stiffly formal in the high collar he wore around his lower jaws, James Buchanan was the only President who never married, but behind that fact lay one of the traumatic experiences of his life. He was born on April 23, 1791 in Cove Gap, Pennsylvania into a well-to-do family. This Gap was in a wild tract of the Alleghenies and was a passageway for rough and tough wagonmen traveling westward. His father farmed there and ran a store catering to these wagonmen.

When James was about six, his father, prospering, moved his family to Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, where the father became a leading citizen and a member along with his family of one of the oldest Presbyterian churches in western Pennsylvania. Through the counsel of Dr. John King, the Presbyterian pastor of whom the future President, James Buchanan, wrote that he had "never known any human being for whom I felt a greater reverence," James went to Dickinson College, of which Dr. King was a trustee.

The youth's career there was marked by excellent intellectual achievement and troublesome conduct. He showed vanity and arrogance and a penchant for disorderly behavior, including drinking, and abruptly was expelled. Dr. King, meanwhile had become President of the Board of Trustees and after much lecturing, arranged his reinstatement though James remained a rebel.

It was not surprising that he followed his father's wishes and chose law as a career, rather than the ministry as his mother had hoped. He studied law in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which city was to be the base of his career in law and politics. One of his brothers, Edward, did become a Presbyterian minister.

Six feet tall, and handsome, James Buchanan acquired a reputation of being a gay young blade but an eligible bachelor. In 1819 he became engaged to Ann Coleman, whose father, Robert, was the richest,

most powerful man in town, but who was not impressed by his daughter's suitor. Ann later became depressed when it was suggested to her that he was courting her for her money. Jealous of his presumably innocent courtesies to another young woman, she broke the engagement.

She went to the home of her married sister in Philadelphia to ease the emotional tension. On December 9, 1819, the shocking word came that she had died from "hysterical convulsions." There was no evidence to support rumors of suicide. Buchanan was appalled and the Colemans and their friends looked upon him as virtually her murderer. He took it as a form of fatalism, returned to Lancaster and resumed a career that eventually led to the Presidency.

His steps upward led to election five times to the House of Representatives; then, after an interlude as Minister of Russia, he served two terms in the United States Senate. He became Polk's Secretary of State and Pierce's Minister to Great Britain. During his time abroad in Russia, he wrote to his brother Edward, the clergyman: "I can say sincerely for myself that I desire to be a Christian, and I think I could withdraw from the vanities and the follies of the world without suffering many pangs. Sometimes I almost persuade myself that I am a Christian; but I am haunted by a spirit of skepticism. Yet I am far from being an unbeliever."

His foreign service helped to bring him the Democratic Party nomination in 1856, because it had exempted him from involvement in bitter domestic controversies. As President-elect, Buchanan thought that the crisis would disappear if he maintained a sectional balance in his appointments and could persuade the people to accept constitutional law as the Supreme Court interpreted it.

Two days after his Inauguration, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney of the Supreme Court delivered the Dred Scott Decision asserting that Congress had no Constitutional power to deprive persons of their property rights in slaves in the territories. Southerners were delighted, but the decision created a furore in the North. The deterioration of the Union was already so extreme that even a man of greater strength and talents than Buchanan could not have hoped for success. He opposed the Northern abolitionists, and supported a policy of noninterference with slavery in the territories.

Sectional strife rose to such a pitch in 1860 that the Democratic Party split into northern and southern wings, each nominating its own candidate for the Presidency. Consequently, when the Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, it was a foregone conclusion that he would be elected even though his name appeared on no southern ballot.

Rather than accept a Republican Administration, the southern "fire-eaters" advocated secession. President Buchanan, dismayed and hesitant, denied the legal rights of states to secede. He hoped for a compromise, but secessionist leaders did not want to compromise. Then he took a more militant stand and sent the ship, "Star of the West", to carry reinforce-

ments to Fort Sumter. On January 9, 1861, the vessel was fired upon and driven away.

Previously, in 1860 Buchanan conferred with a Presbyterian minister and indicated after he retired from the Presidency that he wanted to unite with the Presbyterian Church. The minister urged him to do so immediately and Buchanan replied that if he did so at that time, they would call him a "hypocrite" from Maine to Georgia. In March 1861 he retired to his Pennsylvanian home, leaving his successor as President of the United States to resolve the frightful issue facing the Nation. After his retirement as President in accordance with his promise, he applied for membership in the Presbyterian Church.

He was refused, apparently because the dominant abolitionist sentiment in the northern Presbyterian Church strongly disapproved his compromises on slavery while he was the President. A stalemate ensued between himself and the church during the war years. When the war struggle was ended, political criticism was forgotten and he was admitted to the Presbyterian Church in 1865. He died on June 1, 1865.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

It would be hard to say who was the greatest President of the United States, viewing the office as a political function that must be measured by performance during crises in our history. The political achievement of Abraham Lincoln certainly is of the highest order, and he caught the imagination of the world as no other has done. He is unique among the Presidents of our Country. His face - homely, sad, humorous, and in its total effect oddly beautiful - haunts us. He personified in his own suffering the agony of a nation in fraternal war. Compassion, magnanimity and humility have never been so evident in a man who wielded ruling power.

While he sought to reunite the separated sections of the nation, his capacity to feel and minister to the anguish of some humble, obscure individual is distantly like God's eye upon some fallen sparrow. From the frontier, self-schooled, he achieved rare wisdom and eloquence. Hated and maligned by some in his life, as most Presidents are, in death he touched almost all who had ever heard of him, and his "enemies" in the Confederacy knew they had lost a friend.

Sometimes called an "infidel", often calling himself a fatalist, he brooded all his life on religious questions. Never orthodox, unattached to creed or sect, he ripened during the whole course of his life into one of the most profound religious spirits that ever occupied the White House. Lincoln, if one of the most beloved Presidents, also was one of the most abused.

General McClellan, who served under him and then ran against him,

called him "baboon" and "gorilla" - terms taken up by the opposition press. He was called boorish, vulgar, rude, ignorant. He was charged with vice, dishonesty, and corruption, and his wife was said to be a Confederate spy. Generally, somewhere in the refrain of haters occurred the words of "atheist" or "infidel."

Five months before receiving the Republican nomination for President, he sketched his life - "I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks. My father removed from Kentucky to Indiana and later to Illinois. I grew up in a wild region with many bears and other wild animals in the woods. Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write and cipher - but that was all."

The Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois frontier of Lincoln's boyhood and early manhood was saturated by a primitive, evangelistic, fundamentalist theology. Baptists were the most numerous there and Methodists the runner-ups. The Bible was in most cabins. It was a delight to young Abe to find anyone who could lend him a book. His devoted step-mother, Sally Bush Lincoln, encouraged his taste for reading, for poor Nancy Hanks died too soon to have much influence on her son in that respect.

He did acquire an intimate familiarity with the Bible. In the White House, Lincoln still read from the family Bible, published in 1799. If you did not accept one or another of the prevailing "hard shell" fundamentalist faiths of the primitive orthodoxies of the frontier at that time you were called an "atheist" or "infidel." Lincoln paid little attention to preachers at that time, espoused no creed, but observed good behavior, read his Bible and thought his thoughts.

In 1846, Peter Cartwright, celebrated circuit-riding Methodist preacher, ran against Lincoln for United States Congress. Lincoln went to hear Cartwright preach, and Cartwright asked all to stand who did not wish to go to hell. Everyone in the congregation stood except Lincoln and Cartwright inquired, "Mr. Lincoln where are you going?" Lincoln responded: I am going to Congress," which he did by defeating Cartwright in the Congressional election. His single term as a U.S. Congressman was followed by a long practice of law in Springfield, Illinois.

In 1858, he was the Republican Party nominee for United States Senate, running against Judge Stephen A. Douglas. He lost the election narrowly, but the hard fought campaign, including the series of seven face-to-face debates, began Lincoln's rise to the rank of a national political figure. Two years later he was elected to the Presidency of the United States on the Republican Party ticket.

The moral issue of slavery, the pivot of the Lincoln-Douglas contest, deepened the religious elements of Lincoln's thoughts. He made frequent reference to scriptural categories of judgment. When he left Springfield,

Illinois to travel to Washington, D.C. to become President, mindful that he might not see Springfield again, he told his friend, Presbyterian minister James Smith, "I wish to be remembered in the prayers of yourself and our church members."

In Washington, D.C., the Lincolns attended the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and Lincoln frequently attended the Wednesday night prayer meetings. On one occasion clergymen came to the White House, one of whom expressed the hope that "the Lord was on our side." Lincoln replied: "I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and the nation should be on the Lord's side."

When he proclaimed the Emancipation of the slaves in 1863, he told his cabinet: "I made a solemn vow before God, that if General Lee was driven back from Pennsylvania, I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves."

The religious spirit that guided him was clearly evident in his Second Inaugural Address in 1864, now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds...."

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated at the Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. by John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who somehow thought he was helping the South. The opposite was the result, for with Lincoln's death, the possibility of peace with magnanimity died.

When Secretary of War Stanton, so often embroiled in friction with Lincoln, heard that Lincoln had been killed, Stanton uttered this spontaneous epitaph: "Now he belongs to the ages."

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Presented by Mr. Forrest F. Burgess, Chairman of the Evangelism Commission and the Ushering Committee; former Chairman of the Administrative Board, Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church; and formerly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

THE RELIGION OF THE PRESIDENTS
ANDREW JOHNSON, GRANT, HAYES, GARFIELD

The subject is one that is difficult to get a "handle" on. Presidents like most people feel that religion is a private thing and have generally kept it closely to themselves, and then there have been many who have not been very religious at all. All presidents have attended church, participated in religious events, and have gone along with the religious conventions of our nation. When one delves into their relationship with their God, one encounters little information, no information, or even obstruction.

Historians have given little attention to this facet of the lives of our presidents. The emphasis is politics, and by this we mean their attitudes and contributions towards politics - social, economic, and political problems. When historians have turned to the personal lives of the presidents, they have been concerned with personal habits, "women," marital, and family life - even ways of relaxation.

The nation has a great and deep religious tradition. Religion was a mighty force in our formative years. One is not sure about it as a continuing force. Therefore, the religion of the presidents is a topic of special interest. Any decline in morality, spiritual life or standards, leads us to think of religion. The effectiveness of the nation depends on its leaders, ergo the religion of its leaders is our chief hope.

Politics unfortunately has a bad name. There is no reason for this - except what we have done to make it so. Aristotle regarded politics as the most important element in life because it encompassed everything. Compromises, deals, bargains, arrangements - all of those things necessary to become President of the United States have beclouded the true qualities of sterling character that are also necessary.

We should look at the religion of the presidents because cynicism is rampant. The country has experienced a political nightmare. A poll showed recently that a politician ranked just above the garbage collector in esteem. With many the garbage collector is regarded as more important to society. So we take a look at four presidents. What we learn should serve as a spiritual and intellectual lesson - a standard for the next president and the next and the next, ad infinitum.

ANDREW JOHNSON

The lives of people usually begin with these salient facts which shall be listed for this President: Place of birth, near Raleigh, North Carolina; date of birth, December 29, 1808; condition of birth, abject poverty. Many presidents have been born in poverty - a few in log cabins. But all of them seemed to have something if no more than a hunting gun and a Bible. Johnson's

father was a poor laborer who died very shortly after his birth. His mother married again, but this man had even less. There is nothing about church or education in the early life of the Johnsons. When he was about sixteen he took his mother and stepfather to Columbia, South Carolina, but there conditions of life were even worse for them if that were possible. Johnson had been apprenticed as a tailor in Raleigh and Columbia and had learned a trade.

In these days there was always the possibility of a new life - the West. For years America solved her economic problems with the vast west just as Russia today is using Siberia to siphon off the surplus labor force that is so rapidly growing. The Johnsons went to Greeneville, Tennessee. Greeneville nestles close to the Appalachian Range, and at that time was a thriving community. (The town was named for the Revolutionary War hero General Nathaniel Greene.) There Johnson set up shop and there he met and married Eliza McCardle. The McCardles were people of property and had whatever education was available at the time. They were Methodists, and so for the first time we learn of religion in the life of Johnson.

The Johnson home is on Main Street about two blocks from the Methodist Church. Every Sunday morning Eliza and Andrew, and later the little Johnsons (five of them) walked to church. There is no record that Johnson ever joined the church, although all of his family were members. However, today the church claims him. Eliza taught her husband to read and write and to do arithmetic. Daily she sat by him in the shop and read the classics to him. Such was Johnson's education. Years later it was a great source of pride to him when he walked down the well of the House and dropped a bill in the hopper. He had written every word of it. (Today no Congressman or Senator would deign to write a bill. It would be assigned to some aide who in turn would turn it over to the appropriate staff. But then Congress did not have 15,000 employees as it does now.)

Eliza was Andrew's Mark Hopkins and his Harry Hopkins as well as his Eliza McCardle. She was his political mentor and so he climbed the ladder. Alderman on the town council of Greeneville, Mayor of Greeneville, member of the state legislature (the House), member of the state legislature (the Senate), member of the Congress (the House), Governor of Tennessee, United States Senator. All of these positions he filled with distinction and honor. And he was in the United States Senate in the fateful year of 1860. This was the year which set the stage for Secession. Lincoln was elected president - a minority party and a minority president was coming into power. All of the Southern Congressmen and Senators, all of the Southern members of the military forces, and all of the Southern employees of the Federal Government resigned, crossed the Potomac, and made ready to join the new coalition of states. All except Andrew Johnson. He was Senator from Tennessee, a Unionist, and as he saw it an American. He had no intention of

leaving. His place was in Washington serving the people of his state.

The war proved to be a real war. It seemed that it would never end. And in 1864 it appeared that Lincoln could not be reelected. Feeling in the North over the great loss of life under Grant's leadership was such that the Republicans faced defeat. Under this condition they went to Johnson and asked him to accept the vice presidency - a Democrat, a Unionist, and a Southerner might insure Lincoln's election. And,as always, it was repeated over and over again, "Besides he will never be president anyway."

Lincoln was reelected. He served one month, and Andrew Johnson was President of the United States. No group formed back of him to help him through this time of trial. Instead, bitter Republicans and angry Democrats sharpened their knives and even their axes; a president was to be crucified. At this time Eliza became ill. His chief counselor and adviser could not help him. Between the grindstones of the North and the South he was to be destroyed.

It is said that Johnson did not conduct himself well. He was charged with being irascible and intemperate, but never with being dishonorable or corrupt. He finished his term under conditions not known by any other president before or since. Going back to Tennessee, he was returned to the Senate, where he spent his last days, flaying those who had tried so hard to wreck his life no matter what cost it may have been to the country.

In all of this time of trial and tribulation, Johnson gives little evidence of dependence on or need for spiritual guidance. He regularly attended the Methodist Church with his wife, but was not openly expressive of religious feeling or belief.

ULYSSES S. GRANT

Grant is the best known of the presidents we are discussing. A military hero perhaps better known than any other, his name is a household word. Born in Point Pleasant, Ohio, on April 27, 1822, he came of a family of middle-class means. There is virtually nothing of religion or church affiliation in the Grant family history. Jesse Grant, his father, was not a church member and does not seem to have ever attended church. Grant received the best education Ohio had to offer and was later appointed to West Point. There he finished in the middle of his class, ahead of Jefferson Davis and well ahead of many who became well-known Civil War generals.

Grant's first assignment was a post in Missouri outside of St. Louis. There he met a well-to-do planter, Frederick Dent, and soon became enamored of his daughter Julia. Both Julia and Grant loved horses and spent many happy hours together riding about the Dent estate. (Later the Busch family bought the Dent place and today that is the place where the Clydesdales are raised.) Grant went off to the Mexican War and did not

marry until he returned. He felt that the Army was too trying for his wife, and also he was concerned about the pay of a lieutenant, so he resigned.

The Dents were Methodists and Grant soon formed the practice of going to church regularly with Julia. Hamlin Garland tells of an incident in Point Pleasant that almost finished Grant with religion for all time. He and Julia went to church and, as was common in most Methodist churches at the time, the service ended in a riotous emotional exhibition of glossolalia. Grant fled in horror, and it was years before Julia could get him back, but he did return, and while he was president they attended the Metropolitan Memorial Church in Washington.

Grant never joined a church, but he was active in the Sons of Temperance. This was a men's organization that lobbied for prohibition in various state legislatures. His close association with this group is difficult to understand because he drank whenever he wished. While there is no evidence to indicate that he drank to excess, the decanter was always at hand.

Grant's administrations were the worst in American history up to that time. Corruption was the rule of the day - Reconstruction in the South, big city graft, violence in the West, and pillaging and plundering in the national government. While historians cannot find Grant a participant in this era of evil, nevertheless his friends certainly helped themselves liberally to the Federal treasury.

Grant caused some consternation in Washington by appointing his sergeant as butler of the White House. Things reached such a point that people were soon referring to the White Barracks.

After two terms (the people still held to the old military hero) Grant retired and went to live in New York City. There he formed partnership with a man named Ward - a stockbroker. This was another business failure, even worse than some Grant had previously experienced as a civilian. Thousands of stockholders were ruined; no one blamed Grant, for he knew nothing about the stock market and Grant himself was ruined. Penniless and in great distress, Grant took all of his ceremonial swords to Cornelius Vanderbilt and asked him to buy them or to lend him money with these as collateral. Vanderbilt refused and told him not to worry. Business men in New York raised $250,000 as a trust fund and Grant lived on the interest. (At that time there was no pension for a president and Grant could not claim military retirement because he had resigned his commission and Congress refused to restore it to him. However, Congress finally did - five months before Grant died.)

Grant developed cancer of the mouth and throat. The doctors sent him up to Mt. MacGregor in the Adirondacks for rest, recuperation, and treatment. People from all over the nation

came to pay their respects and to wish him good health. One day a former pastor, Dr. John P. Newman of the Metropolitan Church in Washington, D. C., called on Grant and asked to be alone with him. W. E. Woodward gives the following account: When Dr. Newman entered the sick room he found Grant fast asleep. Going over to the washstand, he procured water and baptized the general. Then he inducted him into the Methodist Church. After leaving the room, Dr. Newman called a press conference and announced that the general had had an eleventh-hour conversion, had accepted Christ, and had joined the Methodist Church. Grant's daughter-in-law, the wife of Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., and daughter of Senator Chafee of Rhode Island, re-called the press and said, "Nonsense."

Grant's funeral was one of the most spectacular events in the history of a city renowned for spectacular events. General Winfield Scott Hancock was Grand Marshal, Dr. Newman conducted the funeral service, generals marched two abreast - one in blue, one in gray - and the procession lasted all day.

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

After the debacle of the Grant administration, the Republicans looked for a candidate "above reproach." They found him in the Governor of Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes. Born in Delaware, Ohio, October 4, 1822, Hayes was all that they could ask for. A man of great dignity and presence, great probity, great Christian character, and a great military hero, he filled the bill at a time when "politician" was not a nice word. (It should be noted that in this period after the Civil War "waving the bloody shirt" was the general political practice. "I fit, bled, and died," rang out from the platforms both North and South.)

Historians sadly record the Hayes administration. While nothing like the Johnson vendetta (there has never been anything like that), Hayes never seemed to be able to do what he was so eminently qualified to do - be a real President of the United States.

First there was the contested election. Tilden, the Democratic candidate, swept the popular vote and seemed assured of election. But there was a Republican Congress and there was the Army of Occupation. An Electoral Commission was formed and by a vote of 8 to 7 (8 Republicans and 7 Democrats) all of the votes of South Carolina, Louisiana, Florida, and Oregon were given to Hayes. The electoral vote was 185 to 184 - "Mr. President by one vote." Or as Thomas Nast, the great cartoonist for the New York Tribune termed it, "His Fraudulency." There had been a meeting; Tilden was sacrificed. Hayes agreed to withdraw the troops from the South, and that was all that they were interested in.

Then for the first time in the history of the country religion was a serious factor in the presidency. Both the President and Mrs. Hayes were people of strong religious principles.

Hayes' position is rather strange. "I am a Christian," he said, "therefore I cannot join a church or accept a creed." Mrs. Hayes (née Lucy Webb) was a devout and loyal Methodist. The President and his children went with her to church. Hayes ordered that no alcohol or tobacco could be used at any White House function. Mrs. Hayes, the First Lady, announced that she would attend no function at which there was any evidence of alcohol or tobacco. This may appear to be a minor matter, but in the capital of the United States it was the cause of jokes, ugly remarks, and even sneers.

There was no Civil Service in the country. The memories of the Grant administration hung over the nation. Appointments were made by politicians as political "pay-offs." Politicians like Conkling of New York and Blaine of Maine and others brooked no questioning of any man recommended for government office. Hayes adopted the practice of investigating the character of the individuals recommended, which aroused the ire, enmity, and hatred of the professional powers-that-be. As the time for the election of 1880 approached, it was evident that the Congressional bloc of Republicans was against him. He might get the nomination, but they would unhesitatingly make reelection impossible.

President and Mrs. Hayes left Washington. Thus ended the career of one of the strongest and finest of our national leaders. He brought that quality of moral fiber which was so characteristic of the early leaders of the nation, but he was the right man at the wrong time.

JAMES A. GARFIELD

The election of 1880 brought out all of the political shenanigans of which this country is capable. Senator John Sherman of Ohio was the leading candidate but was politically ambushed at an early date. (Sherman was one of the three famous Sherman brothers: He, William Tecumseh of Civil War "fame" and also an Indian fighter, and Father Tom, the Jesuit priest who was well-known for his then irregular and unorthodox views.) A strong competitor of Sherman was Congressman James G. Blaine of Maine. Blaine was long on charisma and short on character. He had made a name and much money in the Grant administration. Into this contest came General Grant. He was the first president to ask for and to fight for a third term. Grant deadlocked the convention. And so in a room filled with smoke the Republicans turned to James A. Garfield of Ohio.

Garfield had nominated Senator Sherman. The speech left everyone talking about Garfield rather than Sherman. Born in Orange, Ohio, November 19, 1831, in a log cabin, he had become one of the outstanding political figures in that state. (It was Garfield who described education as "A log with Mark Hopkins on one end and a student on the other." Mark Hopkins

was president of Garfield's alma mater, Williams College.) Like Hayes, he was an extremely religious man. An active member of the Disciples of Christ, he served as a lay preacher when he was a young man. In the White House he continued some of the restrictions on alcohol by Hayes, but he had none of the stiff righteousness of his predecessor.

What kind of president he would have been we will never know. Professor Bailey thinks that Garfield was too inclined to play ball with the "boys," that he would have yielded to political compromise when Hayes would not. But we won't ever know. Garfield was shot and killed by Charles Guiteau, a fairly-well-known lawyer, because an important job had been given to someone else.

This brings up the question of Civil Service. The United States was the only country in the world (advanced nations) which did not have a civil service system. Even Bismarck favored a civil service. Congress had passed a weak act during Grant's administration, but he ignored it. After the death of William Henry Harrison, political office-holding - elected and appointed - depended on patronage. This passed into the hands of the Congress and they intended to keep it that way. Even with all of the uproar which followed the assassination, it was not until 1883 that Congress finally passed the Pendleton Act which was the first real effort at a civil service system. From then until nearly sixty years later, the struggle to wrest patronage from elected political figures went on.

What are we to say about our four presidents? History gives them low grades. The reason for this is that it is said that they were men without vision. Nothing forward-looking came from any of them. Johnson fought for his life. Grant should never have been president; he has often been referred to as either a knave or a fool. Hayes, the best of them all, tried hard to raise the presidency to a higher moral level and was forced out. And we can only be generous to Garfield and say that he "might have been."

This period, 1865-1881, was a time of private enterprise, private gain, private vision. The natural resources of the nation were turned over to "finders keepers." Government even went so far as to subsidize "development" while all profits were channeled into private accounts. Such was the vision of the time. Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt were far in the distant future. Our presidents of this lesson had too little with which to fight, no social guidance, and were over-shadowed by the great moguls of private wealth.

Presented by Dr. Maxcy R. Dickson, Director of Archives and History for the Washington Central District of the Baltimore Conference.

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS

ARTHUR, CLEVELAND AND HARRISON

The subject of this series is the church life and major political activity of the 21st, 22nd and 24th, as well as 23rd Presidents of the United States. Two of the three presidents, whom I shall discuss, were the sons of clergymen.

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

Our 21st President, the beneficiary of an assassin's bullet, was Chester Alan Arthur, born on October 5, 1830, at Fairfield, Franklin County, Vermont. He was the oldest of seven children of the Reverend William Arthur of County Antrim, Ireland, a Scotch-Irish minister. Years later, A. P. Hinman published a book entitled HOW A BRITISH SUBJECT BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES in which he insisted that Chester Arthur was actually born in Canada since the family had lived on both sides of the International border and that Arthur had appropriated the birthday of a younger brother who was born a little later in the United States. Hinman's contention is dubious and cannot be taken seriously.

In 1848 Arthur graduated from Union College (now University) at Schenectady. He taught school for a time, studied law, and was admitted to the New York bar in 1853. By the outbreak of the Civil War, Arthur was a successful lawyer in New York City. Meanwhile, he had married Ellen Lewis Herndon, seven years his junior, in 1859.

As an abolitionist Arthur gained attention when as counsel for the State of New York in the case of Jonathan Lemnon, he successfully argued that slaves brought into New York in transit between two slave states gained thereby their freedom.

Although he had no record of military service during the Civil War, he worked closely with Governor Edwin D. Morgan of New York who appointed him engineer-in-chief, inspector-general, and quartermaster general of the State. In these positions, Arthur demonstrated both administrative ability and honesty. As quartermaster general of New York, he organized the U. S. Volunteers, the largest Volunteer unit in the country, and did an excellent job in making this possible.

President Grant appointed Arthur in 1871 Collector of the Port of New York, a post which he held for the next seven years, until he was removed by President Hayes for violating an executive order prohibiting federal officials from participating in party organizations and campaigns.

As a gesture of conciliation to Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York, who had no use for President Hayes' gesture towards political reform, the Republican Convention in 1880 nominated Chester Arthur to be James A. Garfield's running mate. Victories in New York and Indiana decided this close election in which General Winfield Scott Hancock was the Democratic standard bearer. On March 4, 1881, Garfield was inaugurated.

Four months later Garfield, while on his way to a Williams College class reunion, was shot in the Washington railroad station, as he was about to board a train by Charles J. Guiteau, a mentally unbalanced, disappointed office-seeker. Garfield, as you know, did not die immediately, but lingered on with a shattered spine until his death on September 19th.

The public was quite concerned that Conkling's old friend and political henchman, one who very much approved of the patronage system, was now President. An interesting point about Arthur's becoming President was that he actually took the oath of office twice: "the first administered," notes John Sutherland Bonnell in his PRESIDENTIAL PROFILES, "as soon as news of the president's death reached him and the second when the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court presided. On the latter occasion, President Arthur opened the Bible at the Thirty-first Psalm and reverently kissed the page." He had selected this psalm, because the opening verses reminded him of the Te Deum which his wife often sang in the Episcopal choir, the opening lines of which are: "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness."

Although Arthur was the son of a Baptist preacher, he regularly attended the Episcopal Church, but was never confirmed in it. As President, he attended St. John's Episcopal Church at LaFayette Square and in memory of his wife, who had died two years before he became Vice President, he provided a beautiful memorial window for that church.

It should be noted that Arthur turned out to be a rather good President. He continued the prosecution of the "Star Route" mail frauds, vigorously supported the Pendleton Civil Service Act (1883), which established the present federal civil service system, began the rebuilding of the Navy with steel-hulled ships, and vetoed a Chinese exclusion bill which, had it been adopted, would have been an insult to China.

In his most interesting book, PRESIDENTIAL GREATNESS: THE IMAGE AND THE MAN FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON TO THE PRESENT, Professor Thomas A. Bailey notes that "traditionally downgraded as a dandified mediocrity, Arthur was brushed aside by Professor Woodrow Wilson as 'a nonentity with side-whiskers.'" Bailey continues his evaluation by noting that

"cultured, intelligent, charming, Arthur was an able administrator, if not an imposing leader. A sterling champion of sound money, he gave the country a sound administration and, Arthurian legend to the contrary, surely deserves to rank among the most effective Chief Magistrates. The experts rate him as low Average, but in my view he deserves to rise a few notches higher." And, with Bailey's evaluation I would agree.

Although Arthur may have wanted the Republican nomination in 1884, and to have been elected President in his own right, he was denied these honors. A recent biographer, Thomas C. Reeves, (GENTLEMAN BOSS: THE LIFE OF CHESTER ALAN ARTHUR, New York, 1975) thinks that Arthur knew as early as 1882 that he had Bright's disease. He died in New York City on November 18, 1886.

GROVER CLEVELAND

The 22nd and 24th President of the United States was one and the same person, Stephen Grover Cleveland. He is counted twice because his two administrations were separated by that of President Harrison. Such a designation, if I remember correctly, was opposed by President Harry S. Truman, because He felt that the so-called 22nd and 24th President was the same individual.

My friend, Professor Horace Samuel Merrill of the University of Maryland, begins his short but interesting biography entitled: BOURBON LEADER: GROVER CLEVELAND AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY with this observation: "The Reverend Richard Cleveland seemed always on the move in the effort to escape poverty. Yet he never succeeded. There were always more offspring to feed and clothe; and the lovable preacher, although educated at Yale, was too prosaically dull in the pulpit to graduate beyond village charges." A little over a month after he had married Ann Neal, Richard Cleveland was ordained and installed minister of his first parish, the Congregational Church in Windham, Connecticut.

At the time of Stephen Grover's birth on March 18, 1837, his father was minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Caldwell, New Jersey. The fifth in a family of nine children, he was named in honor of the Caldwell church's former pastor, Stephen Grover, who had died the previous year. "One of Richard Cleveland's successors in the village pulpit said many years later," as Allan Nevins writes, "that 'during his six years' pastorate, Mr. Cleveland's father had a child baptized every year,' and while this was not true, it is easy to see how the impression arose." Two additional children were born to the Clevelands before they left Caldwell. In 1841 Mr. Cleveland accepted a call to a church in Fayetteville, New York.

In his biography GROVER CLEVELAND: A STUDY IN COURAGE, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize, Allan Nevins gives us an insight into young Grover's religious training: "Discipline in the Fayetteville parsonage was strict. Family worship was held every evening. The children were required to memorize the Westminster Catechism and to become familiar with the Bible. The house contained many books, including Greek and Latin classics, theology and some history, and Milton and Shakespeare; but the most entertaining volume in the collection was Bunyan's PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, which they all knew by heart, while the weekly CHRISTIAN OBSERVER was supposed to supply all contemporary knowledge worth knowing. On Sundays, everyone but the babies attended two long church services, Sunday school, and a prayer-meeting. The New England observance of the Sabbath from Saturday at sundown to Sunday at sundown still prevailed, and no avoidable work was done in this period. On Saturday afternoon the house was put in order, playthings were stored away, and early supper was prepared, and in the evening the children received their weekly bath. The next day, there was no play or secular reading; nothing but religious devotion, broken in the middle of the afternoon by the bountiful dinner prepared by the one family servant, a Canadian woman; a roast, a peck of potatoes, and a rice pudding. Then came the only real recreation of the day, a walk in the garden and the orchard, near the house...." In later years, Cleveland was grateful for having been a child of the manse. This feeling was reflected in a letter he wrote: "I have always felt that my training as a minister's son has been more valuable to me as a strengthening influence than any other incident of my life."

As a young man Cleveland had occasion to hear a sermon by the renowed Reverend Henry Ward Beecher in the Plymouth Church of Brooklyn. Beecher's sermon, he later recalled, served as an inspiration for the remainder of his life.

Cleveland's career began in Buffalo, New York, where he first served as an assistant attorney of Erie County; later he was elected sheriff of Erie County and, in turn, mayor of Buffalo. He went on to become governor of New York, serving one term before he was elected President in 1884. At the age of 48, he became the 22nd President of the United States, having taken the oath on a small Bible which his mother had given him in 1852. This Bible was used again for his second inauguration in 1893 and for the christening of two of his grandchildren. While taking the oath of office, Cleveland rested his hand on Psalm 112 whose opening lines are: "Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments."

While in Washington, President Cleveland regularly attended the National Presbyterian Church, whose minister was the Rev. Dr. Byron Sunderland, before whom the President and his young bride, Frances

Folsom, were married in the White House on June 2, 1886. Miss Folsom, the daughter of a close friend and associate of Cleveland's, had wanted to be married at the home of her grandfather, near Buffalo; but his death precluded that. And as Nevins observes: "Cleveland refused to be married in a hotel; he belonged to no church, and so objected to a church wedding. After much debate, it was finally decided that under the circumstances there was but one fitting place."

During Cleveland's first year of office, he vetoed hundreds of private pension bills for Civil War veterans; he vetoed a Dependent Pension Bill (1887) that would have granted pensions to all disabled Union War veterans, whether or not their disabilities were suffered while in service; and, as a means of solving a storage problem, he ordered the return of all captured Confederate battle flags to their respective states. All these actions angered the G.A.R., the big, powerful Union veterans organization.

Cleveland's second term of office, 1893-1897, was beset by the worst depression the United States had experienced during the 19th Century, a depression I might add that lasted for four years. As with many other presidents, "what Cleveland did during those critical years gratified many people and angered many others." Governor John Peter Altgeld of Illinois, who had objected to Cleveland's interference in the Pullman Strike of 1894, caustically remarked the following year: "To laud Clevelandism on Jefferson's birthday, is to sing a Te Deum in honor of Judas Iscariot on a Christmas morning."

During Cleveland's first term the United States acquired by a treaty in 1887, the exclusive right to establish a naval base at Pearl Harbor, near Honolulu; and during his second term, this country forced Great Britain to accede to the establishment of an arbitration commission for the Venezuelan Boundary Dispute.

Thomas Bailey in his book, PRESIDENTIAL GREATNESS, to which I earlier referred, rates Cleveland as "...well above the average in his courageous negativism, but below average in a number of other qualities that we value more highly. If he was the ablest President between Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, the others must have been an indifferent lot indeed. The experts acclaim him a Near Great: I would rank him no better than average." Here, again, I must concur with Professor Bailey.

BENJAMIN HARRISON

The 23rd President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, came from a distinguished Virginia family. His great-grandfather had been a wealthy planter, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and governor of Virginia. His grandfather, William Henry Harrison, the

victor in the Battle of Tippecanoe (1811) and later during the War of 1812 in the Battle of the Thames, had been elected in 1840 as the 9th President of the United States. Meanwhile, William Henry Harrison had established a home on an extensive estate on the Ohio River, just below Cincinnati. There on August 20, 1833, Benjamin was born, the son of John Scott and Elizabeth Irwin Harrison.

In the Fall of 1850, young Benjamin entered Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, and graduated with a bachelor's degree two years later. He married Caroline Scott in the fall of 1853. The following Spring, he was admitted to the Ohio Bar and then moved to Indianapolis, Ind., where he shortly was assisting the City Attorney. Three years later, Harrison was elected City Attorney on the Republican ticket at a salary of $400.00.

When the Civil War began, Harrison was the Supreme Court Reporter for Indiana, and on the day Fort Sumter was fired on, his first volume of Court decisions was published. In the Summer of 1862, he was appointed a second lieutenant to organize the 70th Regiment of Indiana Volunteers. He rose quickly to become a colonel (in one month's time). Harrison's war record was quite distinguished, he having been the only one of the three presidents I am discussing, to have seen military service.

After the election, Senator Matthew Quay of Pennsylvania, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, called on President-elect Harrison at his home in Indianapolis. According to Matthew Josephson in his interesting study THE POLITICOS 1865-1896, Quay "...found the usually self-possessed Harrison deeply stirred, and in pious Presbyterian fashion inclined to thank his God for having favored the Republican Party." "Providence has given us the victory," he exclaimed in deep and solemn tones.

"The Pennsylvania chieftan assented out of habitual politeness, but afterward imparted to his friend, Colonel A. K. McClure, the thought that Harrison was doubtless a 'political tenderfoot' and made a poor impression upon him."

"'Think of the man,' Quay exclaimed. 'He ought to know that Providence hadn't a damn thing to do with it.' And, he added emphatically, that he supposed Harrison 'would never know how close a number of men were compelled to approach the gates of the penitentiary to make him President.'"

During Harrison's term (1889-1893) the McKinley Tariff and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act were enacted as was also the Dependent Pensions Act, which doubled the number of pensions between 1889 and 1893.

Suffering from tuberculosis, Mrs. Harrison died in the White House in October 1892. Two weeks later, Harrison was decisively defeated for re-election by former President Grover Cleveland.

Harrison was certainly a good churchman. He served as a deacon and later as an elder of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. In addition, he taught a men's Bible Class in the church and the Y.M.C.A. When his son, Russell, became involved in some foolish financial speculation that proved costly, Harrison offered this advice: "There is nothing for you except to meet your difficulties bravely and squarely....Do not let any pressure of seeming necessity draw you one inch away from the line of honor and duty....Prayer steadies one when he is walking in slippery places." Like Cleveland, Harrison and his wife attended the National Presbyterian Church while in Washington.

Three years after his departure from the White House, Harrison remarried. His second wife was Mrs. Mary Scott Lord Dimmock, by whom he had a daughter. A son and a daughter had been born of his first marriage. In 1901, five years following his second marriage, Harrison died and was buried in Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis, alongside his first wife.

Seven years later, Harrison's predecessor and successor, Grover Cleveland, died at his home in Princeton, New Jersey, at age 71.

Thomas Bailey regards Harrison as "a medium-sized man with perhaps better than medium-sized abilities," one who "had given the Country a mediocre, mark-time administration. The experts lodge him almost in the middle -- that is, the middle of the Average category, but he seems to slip more comfortably into the top of the Below Average (Presidential) group." With that assessment, I am inclined to agree.

Two of our three presidents, as we have seen, were sons of clergymen. These two, while apparently regular in their church attendance, did not join the churches they attended. The third, Benjamin Harrison, was a devout layman in his church. All three were Christian gentlemen.

Presented by Dr. William Lloyd Fox, Professor of History, Montgomery College; Author, and Member of the Universalist National Memorial Church.

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS
MCKINLEY, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, TAFT, WILSON, AND HARDING

WILLIAM MCKINLEY

The mother of William McKinley, Nancy Allison McKinley, was content to rear her children in the love and fear of God, according to the principles of the Methodist Church. William inherited his mother's deeply religious nature. At the age of ten, he made a public profession of faith, marching to the mourner's bench at a revival meeting, and at sixteen he became a devout communicant of the Methodist Church. His mother's ambition was to rear a son for the ministry. William already showed every qualification for a pastor and a preacher when he was graduated from the Poland Academy (near Youngstown, Ohio) at the age of seventeen. But he went into the army for four years. He loved the fun and companionship of army life, and came out a major. Dancing, cards, and the theater had been rigidly forbidden in his strict Methodist home, as well as those two other snares of Satan, wine and tobacco, and the army did not change him. In Canton, Ohio he was a faithful member of the First Methodist Church, and was made superintendent of its Sunday School. The loving-kindness of God was his religion, and the source of his inner serenity. His favorite hymns were: "Nearer, My God, to Thee," "Lead Kindly Light," "Jesus Lover of My Soul," and "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy."

In his first inaugural, he kissed the open Bible at the passage, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" (II Chron.1:10) The McKinley's continued the practice adopted by Hayes of holding a hymn sing on Sunday evenings at the White House. As president, he went to church on Sundays. He had come to Washington with the Bible Text from Micah 6:8 in his mind - "What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" He kept his faith alight by public worship. He attended the Metropolitan Methodist Church, joining unostentatiously in the service like any other devout parishioner. And his faith was tested. His wife, Ida Saxton McKinley had had a childhood history of a nervous illness. After they came to Washington, she suffered a severe epileptic attack, and sank into a hysterical depression such as she had not known for years. This shadow in which President McKinley walked tightened his hold on faith. In the midst of heavy cares, a part of his mind had been occupied with a fresh assessment of his religious belief.

A signed paper, dated May 26, 1899, was inserted in his letter book. It stated: "My belief embraces the Divinity of Christ and

a recognition of Christianity as the mightiest factor in the world's civilization." The record, so formally preserved, suggests the solemnity with which the president had resolved to strip from his personal creed the last traces of dogma. The paper was purely private. It did not imply or contemplate an estrangement from Methodism. McKinley, in the truest sense, "belonged" to the Methodist communion, drawing inspiration from the connection and fellowship. At Buffalo, the day before he was assassinated (September 6, 1901) he said: "God and man have linked the nations together... . The period of exclusiveness is past ... . No nation can be indifferent to any other ... . Let us ever remember ... that our real eminence lies in victories of peace, not those of war ... . Our earnest prayer is that God will graciously vouchsafe prosperity, happiness and peace to all our neighbors, and like blessings to all peoples and powers on earth." As he died, he was heard to whisper the words of his best-loved hymn - "Nearer, my God, to thee / Nearer to thee: / E'en though it be a Cross ... "

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

McKinley's successor did not leave such an extensive exhibit of his religious tenets. Roosevelt, at sixteen, had joined the Dutch Reformed Church, and was the second president of that denomination, Martin Van Buren having been the other. In Washington, Roosevelt and his family attended the Grace Reformed Church regularly. His mother and his second wife were Episcopalians. He had decided views on religion and the Bible. He believed and practiced a "muscular Christianity," a religion of confidence and action. One of his favorite texts was from James 1:22, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." His gospel of life, appropriately expounded to one of the cowboy members of the Rough Riders, was: "Get action; do things; don't fritter away your time; create; act; take a place wherever you are and be somebody." In line with these sentiments of wishing to be in the center of the stage it was said that he never attended a funeral without secretly wishing to be the corpse, and never graced a wedding where he did not long to be the bride.

Roosevelt's "muscle Christianity" showed in the following incidents. At the San Antonio Fairgrounds where the Rough Riders were encamped prior to their going to Cuba during the Spanish-American War, a veterinarian's son reminded Teddy "You said you would swear me in when you got to San Antonio." In characteristic fashion, T.R. reached for a small Bible on the far side of the table - he usually kept a Bible within easy reach. Grinning, Roosevelt extended the Bible, motioned for the young man to place one hand on it, with the other raised, T.R. quoted the oath and

had the youth repeat it. "Hah!" Teddy roared, "Now you are a full-fledged Rough Rider." Later, aboard ship on the way to Cuba, early on Sunday, June 19, 1898, a young man put out his washing then went to church on the after deck. He sat beside Roosevelt in the choir, and heard the Reverend Henry Brown preach a sermon on "Respect." The minister made a very favorable impression on the future president, for, later, as Roosevelt took leave of the Rough Riders, he turned to Chaplain Brown and said: "Chaplain, you had done noble work. There is no time like the present to give expression to the feeling we all bear you. You are as brave as any man in the regiment. When we went up that hill, I even caught you with a carbine in your hand. Your action on the firing line and your unrelenting care for the wounded when you would go into the midst of the shower of lead to minister to the men's wants deserve the highest praise."

The fact that T.R.'s religion was hardly of the kind of that of McKinley is evidenced by his writing. He stated: "Life is a long campaign where every victory leaves the ground free for another battle, and sooner or later defeat comes to every man, unless death forestalls it. But the final defeat does not and should not cancel out the triumph." Intellectually and morally he was as many sided as he was emotionally. He was a Darwinist - the survival of the fittest school of thought. He believed that man and the higher anthropoids had developed from creatures which originally possessed "only such mental attributes as a mollusk or crustacean of today." Identifying man with the entire living kingdom, he suggested that the higher animals thought and trained their young, endowing them with both "intellectual and moral traits." He was disinclined to talk about mystical religion, and repeatedly stated that his religion consisted of good works. But this doctrine scarcely suggested immortality to him. He went to church, not because he felt he needed it, but to "set an example."

The many-sideness of T.R.'s character showed in the nature and extent of his faith. While he regarded life as a campaign with earthly limitations, one authority held that all T.R. said and did was undergirded by his faith in the overruling Providence of God. He knew the Bible well and continually refreshed his spirit by its message. The passage upon which he chose to lay his hand when he was sworn into office typified his concept of religion. It was Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." But he did not apply these requirements across the board in the secular world. He inveighed against the malefactors of great wealth; but it was never clear what really bothered him, and many of his malefactors of great wealth had a more serious social consciousness than he

had, and were steadily contributing to the growth of the institutions that gave character to the American experience. Loving life as he did, he felt that death was the "final defeat," "a going out into the darkness," "when all things are the same to every man." Roosevelt frequently had remarked that death, under all circumstances is a tragedy. Mercifully, he was spared the knowledge of its approach, for he died in his sleep in his sixty-first year, June 6, 1919.

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

William Howard Taft has put little in writing that would indicate his personal religious thinking. From an old, distinguished, moderately wealthy Cincinnati family, Taft weighed 350-pounds. He was, understandably, inclined to placidity, amiability, and the pleasure of talking, playing golf, eating and sleeping. He was an uncomplicated man, not ambitious, with a trained mind of an unexceptional character. He preferred to be Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to being President. His references to the Almighty bear the stamp of the pragmatism of his legal profession. He held that the principles of right and justice, honesty and morality, are not merely conventional. They come from a "higher source" than a plebiscite, from a "natural law" that was the best argument for God since it worked "more accurately than any which can be devised by man." As for the presidency, Taft observed,"I have come to the conclusion that the major part of the work of a President is to increase the gate receipts of expositions and fairs and bring tourists to town." Note how this concept differs from that of Wilson.

The closest approach to a revelation about his thinking regarding religion and denominationalism resulted from an invitation to accept the presidency of Yale University. To his brother, Henry Taft, who was pressing the invitation, he wrote that because of the tradition of Yale of always having a Congregational clergyman for president, many of the alumni and supporters would be shocked to learn that the post had been given to one "who could not subscribe to the creed of the Orthodox Congregational Church of New England." He then explicitly stated his denominational preference: "I am a Unitarian. I believe in God. I do not believe in the divinity of Christ ... I am not, however, a scoffer at religion but on the contrary recognize, in the fullest manner, the elevating influence that it has had and always will have in the history of mankind."

In his youth, Taft attended a Unitarian Sunday School and read the Bible with a degree of regularity. When the matter of his Unitarian background was raised as a campaign issue he said: "If

the American electorate is so narrow as not to elect a Unitarian, well and good. I can stand it." A further indication of the nature of his thinking about the Christian faith is in these words from a public address to the Conference of Laymen's Missionary Movement, in New York, 1908: "The spirit of Christianity is pure democracy. It is the equality of man before God - the equality of man before the law, which is, as I understand it, the most God-like manifestation that man has been able to make." One does not find in these words any strong commitment to traditional Christianity. However, it may be regarded as evidence of a devotional spirit in Taft's home that his son, Charles, became an avowed Christian, uniting with the Episcopal Church, and later in life was elected president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. Among his published books is one entitled, Why I Am For The Church.

WOODROW WILSON

On a Sunday morning in 1861, a large congregation was gathered in the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta, Georgia. At the announcement period a tall, well-built minister looked down at his people and said: "At this very moment a battle is being fought in Virginia and our Confederate forces are in grave need of ammunition. This congregation must do its duty. Immediately at the close of these services the ladies will repair to the munitions factory to help with the cartridges. You will now rise and sing the Doxology and be dismissed." Sitting in front of the preacher was his five-year old son destined to be the President of the United States and the greatest idealist of his time - Woodrow Wilson. The influence of his father remained with him always. All his life he prayed on his knees morning and evening. Every day he read the Bible. He wore out two or three Bibles in the course of his life. He said grace before every meal. He believed that through prayer he was specifically guided by God. He once said, "I am content to leave my reputation to the verdict of history." We have only to reflect that the more equitable peace (than that engineered by Wilson's enemies in the U. S. Senate) that was effected by the Allies in 1945, though still a long way from perfection, was based to a considerable degree on the principles that Woodrow Wilson laid down in 1919.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke, author of The Other Wise Man, and Minister to Belgium, who knew Wilson intimately both in Princeton and Washington, said: "Deep down in his soul was a great idealism, a high sense of honor, a genuineness, an unselfishness that would sacrifice all for an ideal." One authority stated that he

was the only true Calvinist to sit in the White House. Another called him a world-minded Calvinist. He demonstrated this quality when he wrote this about the immigrants to America, "They saw this star of the west rising over the peoples of the World, and they said, 'That is the star of hope and the star of salvation. We will set our footsteps toward the west and join that body of men whom God has blessed with the vision of liberty.'" His foresight was as great as his vision: At St. Louis, September 5, 1919, on the failure of the United States to join the League of Nations, he said: "And the glory of the Armies and Navies of the United States is gone like a dream in the night, and there ensues upon it, in the suitable darkness of the night, the nightmare of dread which lay upon the nations before this war came; and there will come sometime, in the vengeful Providence of God, another struggle in which, not a few hundred thousand fine men from America will have to die, but as many millions as are necessary to accomplish the final freedom of the peoples of the world."

At Kansas City his power of prophecy makes one think of Isaiah or Jeremiah. Referring to the League of Nations, he said, the United States will join it or war will come again in twenty years and the babe at your breast will be a casualty of that war. That was in 1919. In 1939, World War II began. As Wilson's concern for mankind was greater than that of some other presidents, so was his down-to-earth concept of the presidency. He said: "The office of President requires the constitution of an athlete, the patience of a mother, and the endurance of an early Christian." His unshakeable belief in the power of prayer to guide him made him confident that right would prevail. His Calvinism came to his rescue when the United States turned down the League of Nations, and he could accept that stanza of John Burroughs: "What matter if I stand alone? / I wait with joy the coming years; / My heart shall reap where it has sown, / And garner up its fruit of tears." As a devout Christian, he accepted Congress' decision on the League, for he held that as he said: "Whatever strength I have and whatever authority I possess are mine only so long and so far as I express the spirit and purpose of the American people." As the only true Calvinist ever to sit in the White House, there was in him a genuine zest for reform. Thus, thanks to him, in the first thirteen months of his first administration more progressive legislation was pssed than in any similar time in the history of the United States until the era of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. But Wilson's zest for reform related less to political considerations than those of other "reform" presidents. Fundamentally, Wilson was a missionary - first to Princeton, then successively to the State of New Jersey, to the United States, and to the world.

WARREN G. HARDING

Harding has been regarded universally as the worst President this country has had, up to his time. Concerning him, John A. Garraty, Professor of History of Columbia University says these questions have been asked repeatedly: How could such a deplorable event as the election of Harding happen despite the safeguards of American democracy? Why did not the people become aware of the moral letdown that was in the making? Biographers of Harding answered these queries in these words: "That was precisely what the American people were told that, unconsciously, they wanted a relief both from the tensions of war and from a president who had so long invoked their consciences and talked to them in moral tones." With Harding began the change in the ruling elite of the American people from the Protestant ethic of hard work and one's word was as good as one's bond, to the social ethic based upon the answer to the single question: "What's in it for me?". The adverse reaction of the ruling elite to Wilson, and that elite's subsequent manipulation of the masses reminds one of Aristides of Athens (530 - 468 B.C.). Because this noble Athenian had cleansed the capital city of flagrant corruption and made the same justice available to all, the common people admired him and gave him the surname "the Just." But after the battles were over and the victory won, they began to weary of Aristides and plotted his exile. On the day when the vote was being taken in the public square on his ostracism, Aristides himself was present. He was approached by an illiterate fellow who, not recognizing the great Athenian, asked him to write the name of Aristides on the piece of pottery that was his ballot. Surprised, he asked the man if Aristides had ever done him wrong. "Not at all" said he, "neither do I know the man, but I am tired of hearing him everywhere called "the Just." Woodrow Wilson was the American Aristides.

Harding was the twentieth century reaction to the twentieth century Aristides. When the law had taken its course with the personnel of his administration, five of them were found guilty of law breaking in connection with oil leases, Teapot Dome naval oil reserves, and Veterans' Bureau scandals, and were sent to prison. There were no "peeping tom" judges to serve that administration. Three were suicides and many were broken men who remained broken for the rest of their lives. The President's Daughter revealed Hardings moral standards. At least one unfortunate event was hushed up, namely, the killing of a girl at the Little Green House on K Street when Harding was in the party. This record may be explained or

excused in part by the nature of Harding's record in religion. We know little or nothing of the inner commitments of Harding in the matter of religion. Outwardly he exhibited the appropriate deference toward the institution of religion which in this nation is expected of persons in high public office. His mother was a devoted member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. But Warren was a jovial, easy-going, shallow man, whose principal friends were in the Capital's poker-playing set. Harding brought to the White House the moral code of the hangers-on around a rural county courthouse. He did not join any church until after he had become an influential citizen of Marion, Ohio. Then he became a member and later a trustee of the Baptist Church. This connection would become of increasing importance to him as he advanced in political life. After his election, a friend wished him Godspeed. He replied: "Yes, God help me, for I shall need it." His scandal-ridden term of office made his words prophetic.

Harding completes the first group of twentieth-century presidents who were examined for their religiosity. The quintet started with an avowed Methodist and ended with an expedient Baptist. With the exception of Woodrow Wilson's first administration, 1913 - 1917, the influence of religious principles in the conduct of the office was overshadowed by the ethics of the day. With the exception of Harding, the family life of these chief executives comported with the tenets of the Christian religion. The absence of any great influence of religion on the official actions of these five presidents, with the exception of Wilson, and the rejection of Wilson's Calvinistic program by the voters who included women voting for president for the first time in 1920, possibly indicated that Americans who counted, were rendering more things to Caesar than they were to God.

Presented by Dr. James R. Mock, Professor Emeritus, Sociology and Social Science, Montgomery College; Former Adjunct Professor of History and Communications, The American University; Director of the Forum, Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church.

THE RELIGION OF THE PRESIDENTS
COOLIDGE, HOOVER, ROOSEVELT

The topic which you have chosen is of great interest and should be one that could be presented without hard labor. However, this is not the case. Something has developed in American political life that is not understandable. The religions of our political leaders have come to be something of a secret.

Last year my wife brought home a copy of the 1974 Congressional Directory. I sat down and read all of the biographies of the Congressmen and Senators. This is not recommended reading because it is not any sort of writing. Phrases are strung together on commas as a means of listing accomplishments and memberships of the representatives of the people. I stuck to it because I was looking for something and I found it. Less than 25% of the members of Congress put down that they were members of any church. I know that this is not the case, but I do not know why they do not mention it. It could be that religion is so personal that it cannot be mentioned. Or that this is separation of church and state. Or something else. And it is about this difficult concerning the presidents.

It was not always so. Eighteenth century Americans were very articulate about their religions. But then the eighteenth century was the Age of Enlightment. Consider this quote from an eighteenth century American politician:

> You desire to know something of my Religion. It is the first time I have been questioned about it.... Here is my creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable Service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of Man is immortal and will be treated with Justice in another life respecting its Conduct in this....
>
> As to Jesus of Nazareth, my Opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the System of Morals and Religion, as he left them to us, the best the World ever saw or is likely to see; but I apprehend it received various corrupting Changes....

Now the simplicity and clarity of this statement is quite real; this is expression in a manner of which we are not now capable. Or at least don't try to be. But Benjamin Franklin, writing to Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College, in 1790, found no problem whatever.

When Everett Lomax called and asked me to participate in this program I was prepared to do so, because Jim Mock had told me of a book on the subject, Presidential Profiles by John Sutherland Bonnell. As long as I could find something to go on,

I was willing to try. Also I lived all of this period and had memories of first-hand knowledge as well as books. It did not come through to me at first, but Dr. Bonnell is one of the most distinguished clergymen in this country. He has appeared on television and perhaps you have heard and seen him. Although quite an elderly gentleman, he is in excellent health, and that is what counts. He is a Presbyterian.

Dr. Bonnell used the autobiographies and memoirs of the presidents who wrote any, and then made a very select list of biographies. I have sought to look elsewhere - religious histories, memoirs of those who knew the presidents, biographies and writings of those who lived at the time. It is very interesting that information was so scarce. For example, Dr. Gaustad in his Religious History of the United States makes no reference to the religion of the presidents. I talked to you about Dr. Sidney Ahlstrom's Religious History of the American People but found that while he has two chapters on our period, there is nothing on the presidents.

The period is one of the most vital and active in our history and so far as religion is concerned, perhaps the most. It is the time after World War I. The Church Militant has not only put through prohibition in every state, but has also added the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. Our Constitution states that everything not given to the National Government is reserved to the states; therefore the 18th Amendment. This is the time of Father Coughlin, Gerald L. K. Smith, Billy Sunday, Aimee Semple MacPherson. It is also the time of the iconoclast of Baltimore, H. L. Mencken, who lambasted religion whenever he could. It is the time of the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan of Reconstruction had been disbanded in 1876, but in 1915 was revived by a man named Green in Indiana. It was indeed powerful. But our special interest is in the Church Militant. The zeal and spirit which put through prohibition are an astounding phenomenon in our history.

CALVIN COOLIDGE

Coolidge was born in Plymouth, Vermont, of a family of very moderate means. They were of old Yankee stock and were members of the Congregational Church. Dr. Bonnell seizes upon three incidents in Coolidge's life to give evidence of the religion of this man. (He is very effusive about the religious nature of Coolidge and Hoover also.)

When Coolidge was a boy his mother died. There is a scene of the family gathered around the bed in prayer. To Dr. Bonnell this is of great significance. Coolidge read the Bible regularly to his grandfather. The grandfather's favorite Book was the Gospel According to John. When his father administered the oath of office to him, Coolidge opened the Bible to the Book of John, placed his hand on it, and took the oath. While president, one

of his sons had a blister on his heel. This led to blood poisoning, and nothing could be done for the boy. Coolidge wrote in his Autobiography that he sat by the boy's side and the boy said "Make me well." Coolidge wrote, "I could not," and then he added, "All the power and the glory of the presidency went with him." Dr. Bonnell says that the Coolidges attended the Congregational Church in Washington. I do not know which one. I assume that there are more than one. And this is the only place that I have seen reference to church attendance.

While all of the above certainly indicate a man of fine feelings, they are hardly sufficient to show a man of strong religious feelings. In that scene with his son, I see a grief-stricken father. I do know at the time that no one could see the President for months. While I understand, I don't see how he could act this way. The president is not a free agent. The "power and the glory of the presidency" cannot go with anybody but the president. When Lincoln died, they went to Andrew Johnson.

I would like to digress here and make a few observations. What does religion require of and give to us? Let me name at least three items: 1. Spiritual and emotional uplift. 2. Intellectual stimulus. 3. Recognition of and acceptance of responsibility. Apply these to Coolidge and the findings are not good.

Coolidge was not a crook. But we can't settle for such a low standard as that. What was he? We know that he could not bear to discuss problems. Examples: The press: "Mr. President, what do you think should be done about the enforcement of prohibition?" Mr. Coolidge: "I do not choose to discuss that." The press: "Mr. President, bank failures increase every day. What should we do?" Mr. Coolidge: "I do not choose to discuss that." Ike Hoover, who was Usher of the White House from McKinley through FDR, wrote in his memoir that of them all Coolidge did the least and was the worst. Question: What is the relationship between response to duty and religion?

Coolidge, a graduate of Amherst, had been Governor of Massachusetts. In that position he received credit for something he never did and so attained some national recognition, but the real reason for his selection as Vice Presidential candidate was the fact that he was from Massachusetts. According to our system until very recently, the ticket must be balanced geographically. In 1920 the Republicans felt that they needed New England. Coolidge was the man. Besides it was always said, "He will never be president anyway." Six years of "do not choose" left the Republicans jittery because he was eligible for a second full term under our tradition. When he said "I do not choose to run" the collective sign of relief from the Republicans could be heard throughout the land. (Congress had tried to fill the vacuum but a committee cannot

lead. The Constitution places leadership in the presidency.)

I would like to digress here again. Politicians do not like a horse race. They like a sure thing. In 1928 the Republicans believedthat they had a sure thing and he was not Calvin Coolidge. They wanted one of the outstanding men in the country, the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover.

I cannot go to Hoover without some word on the election of 1928. We passed over the election of 1924 where William G. McAdoo and Al Smith tore the Democratic Party apart. Now in 1928 the Democrats could no longer deny the No. 1 Democrat, Al Smith, the distinguished Governor of New York. (I read that George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, is a national figure. What's he got to be national about? As Al Smith said, "Let's look at the record.") But our interest here is the Church Militant. Once again the Protestants unite. Once again they march. With their unwanted, unsavory, and unholy allies, the bootleggers and the Ku Klux Klan, the Church Militant went forth to do battle. I shall not go into details of the election. The "charges" against Al Smith, the work of Bishop Cannon of the Methodist Church, and the burning of crosses at the election polls by the Klan. Let us just say, Al Smith was defeated. It was a great victory for an unholy alliance.

HERBERT HOOVER

Hoover was born in West Branch, Iowa, of a very poor Quaker family. When he was a boy his mother died and there is a scene of the family gathered around the bedside in prayer. His father could not take care of the children, so they were "farmed out" to other members of the family. Hoover went to live with an uncle in Oregon. When he grew up he went to Stanford University. There he worked his way through school. He carried newspapers, mowed lawns, waited on tables. He would do anything that was honorable. He graduated as a mining engineer and, as the speakers at commencement exercises always say, went out into the world. In his case it was literally so. He went to Australia, New Zealand, China, and Europe. He was looking for minerals. I don't mean gold and silver or even oil. Industry depends on some seventy minerals for alloys and other metals. They are such minerals as magnesium, zinc, nickel, copper, tin, bauxite. Hoover found them and signed contracts with grateful governments for the "development" of these resources. (Today, if a young man "went out into the world" and found such metals, he would immediately be arrested, imprisoned, and deported. Today, the word is exploitation. Hoover was the right man at the right time.) At 25 Hoover was well past his first million, so he retired. (It is ironic that this man who so opposed government in our lives should never have another job except in government.) He became the protege of Woodrow Wilson, the head of the United States Food Administration in World War I (the only book I ever wrote was about Hoover), the head of the United States Relief Administration after the war, and finally Secretary of Commerce, where he was regarded as the strong man in a

cabinet which included such men as Charles Evans Hughes. In 1928 he had so many honorary college degrees that Menchen always referred to him as Lord Hoover. (But not any after he was president.)

Such was the man who was now president. The nation had every reason to feel confident. Dr. Bonnell says that he was a very devout Quaker. I do not know. When he was nominated for president, the question was raised - "Can a Quaker be commander-in-chief of the armed forces?" The answer was - Yes, he is not that kind of Quaker. There is one thing that impresses me. Hoover married a very lovely lady - Miss Lou Henry. The Henrys were a far cry from the Hoovers. They were extremely well-to-do and they were Episcopalians. Mrs. Hoover was a geologist. Now if you will excuse a personal reference: I had a grandmother and my mother who left their churches to join the churches of their husbands in order to be with them. This was very important. It is not possible to make more of a religious change than to go from Episcopalian to Society of Friends, but this Mrs. Hoover did. Therefore I assume that she did so to be with her husband. But everything has to be assumption, for Hoover gives us no help at all.

Hoover's administration was a complete disaster. To students of Hoover this is incredible, but that is the case. Coolidge's legacy to Hoover was the Crash of 1929. A chart of the economic picture during Hoover's four years is a line all the way down. We reached the point of 56% of the labor force out of work and all of the farmers in complete ruin. He had an answer to all of this. He had a bible. But it was not the Bible. It was Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations. Hoover was the last President of the United States to read this to the American people. From Adam Smith we get such notions as free enterprise, the sacred law of supply-and-demand, that government is best which governs least. This is the ideal state - Capitalism. Adam Smith saw two major functions for government - policemen and firemen. Stop now and try to think of some function the government performs other than these two.

Hoover was positive that private industry would save this situation. "Prosperity is just around the corner" and private industry will take us there. Private industry reminds me of a line from Uncle Remus. Uncle Remus said, "Bre'r Rabbit, he lay low." For those of you who do not speak Uncle Remus I shall translate: "Brother Rabbit maintained a low profile." Private industry was watching and waiting to see what would happen. Meanwhile, Hoover ordered General Douglas MacArthur to throw the veterans out of Washington, vetoed all bills including one to build a dam across the Colorado River, but was persuaded by private industry to sign the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act. Hoover's religion never helped him to understand the hunger and misery of millions.

By the end of Hoover's term the situation in the country was so bad that it was said that if the Democrats nominated a

yellow dog, he would be elected. It must be emphasized that Hoover was not a crook. And it must be said again that this is too low a standard for our presidents. What were they? In Hoover's case it is clear. That is, it is clear to us now. He never understood and left the office with greater bitterness than any president since John Adams.

Al Smith was delighted. Now was his opportunity. Prohibition was dead. State and local officials all over the country were refusing to assist federal authorities. Surely in the dire economic condition, Roman Catholicism would hardly be noticed? But always keep in mind the politicians. They don't want a horse race. So they said to James A. Farley, the Chairman of the Democratic Party in New York (Mr. Farley celebrated his 90th birthday in May of this year), "Jim tell Governor Smith that the yellow dog has got to be a Protestant." I regret to report that this destroyed Al Smith. Religion, among other things, is supposed to be a source of strength and comfort in time of disaster. There was no evidence of that here. It was too much for him; he was consumed with bitterness and hatred. I was disappointed. I believed he could have won but the politicians said no.

The Church Militant made its last effort. Things could not be worse. The "Vote Dry, Drink Wet" support had vanished. Leaders like Bishop Cannon of the Methodist Church were tarnished. The Ku Klux Klan was in bad repute. Many terrible things had happened and the Klan was blamed. (In some cases they claimed "credit.") The Church Militant was in no position to attack the Episcopal Church. Hoover never took a stand on the 18th Amendment, so it was assumed that he was against repeal. The Church Militant went all out, but like the Confederate Army at Gettysburg, they had captured Little Round Top and Big Round Top but could not hold them. Franklin D. Roosevelt carried 42 of the 48 states.

And so the great tide of Protestant Reform receded. The churches adopted an entirely different approach. They avoided secular questions and retired into a small "do-gooding" sphere. And even today they do not "last out." Confronted with flagrant violation of the laws relating to the manufacture, sale, and use of drugs, they establish clinics for rehabilitation. The zeal and spirit of the early part of the century were gone.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

FDR was a country boy. He was born in the manor house of a Dutch patron. His people were immigrants who came to this country more than two hundred years before he was born. He said that if elected he would do all that he could to repeal the 18th Amendment. He was an Episcopalian.

When he was a boy his father died, but there is no record of a "scene." His mother, Mrs. Sarah Delano Roosevelt, took

over as father and mother. She marched Franklin to church every Sunday - and when he grew up, got married, and brought his wife to live with his mother, the family went to church. He was a vestryman in St. James Episcopal Church, Hyde Park. When he and Mrs. Roosevelt came to Washington first as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, then as president, they liked to go to St. Thomas' Church on 18th Street. This church has since been burned down by the blacks. I do not know why.

Such was the record of the 32nd president. Mrs. Roosevelt says in her memoir, This I Remember, that religion was a very personal matter with him and that it was very important. She says that there was a Bible by his bedside at all times and that his favorite passages were the Twenty-third Psalm, the Beatitudes, and the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. (Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels....) When disaster struck, and it did, she says that religion was a source of strength and guidance. He turned tragedy into triumph with the aid of his religion. In his speeches he made reference to God more than any other president. I accept all of this. I am not going to say that it was for "political effect." Dr. Bonnell accepts this, but he writes with great restraint.

Those of us who lived at the time felt that we lived in a time of greatness. I have been in restaurants which were as quiet as this room. The radio was on and he was talking to "My friends." As Benjamin Franklin said, he was doing good to the other children of God. There is no need to recount the activities of the New Deal. You know them. All that I can add is that there was great compassion in these acts. Little people were helped because they were little people and they were in trouble. "I don't care what kind of 'ism' it is; I am going to save this country." "He has killed the Socialist Party in America," said Norman Thomas, "no matter what it is called, the country was saved, and isn't that what religion is all about?"

I wish that I could end on this note. In fact, I wish two things: I wish that I could talk about Mrs. Roosevelt. We have never had a First Lady like her. She is very important. And I wish that I could say that religion guided FDR all the way. But that is not the case.

Please bear with me a few minutes more. It is the year 1940. This was said to be a "crucial year." All years are crucial, because it is the present that is crucial. 1975 is a crucial year. But let us look at 1940. Think of it. Thirty-five years ago. Many of you remember it; all of you were alive then. Up to now we have spoken only of affairs in the United States. The world was important, but our time did not permit. Now let us look at the world. Hitler and Musolini had securely established Franco in Spain. Hitler was running over Europe with only England defying him and Russia nervously awaiting the onslaught. In the East or to the west of us, the militarists in Japan were in full control. They were the allies of Aryan Hitler

and they were telling the peoples of Asia and Africa that Japan was the natural leader of the colored peoples of the world. This was what FDR saw and this was what all of us saw. Today if you want to show off, just say that FDR did not end unemployment, Tojo did. This bit of sophistry will establish you among Washington's pundits.

Now this is what I believe: FDR ceased to walk humbly with his God. Humility is another characteristic of religion. I am convinced that he was convinced that he was indispensable. He asked the American people for a third term. (Dr. Bonnell ends his account of FDR abruptly. He writes, "He was elected to a third term." This reminds one of the abrupt ending of the Book of Acts. "Paul rented a house in Rome....")

The American people were now confronted with a problem. They supported the tradition established by Thomas Jefferson for two terms. But they said this man has done so much for us, how can we deny him? And so the stage was set for "the end."

We know now that at no time did FDR groom or prepare another man to succeed him. (What a difference since his time!) The Vice President presided over the Senate and read the newspapers. It is on this sad note that I conclude. We have taken care of the problem now. It can never happen again. But it is too bad that it did happen. Maybe this is the way that democracy learns; maybe this is the way that we scramble back to religion.

Presented by Dr. Maxcy R. Dickson, Director of Archives and History for the Washington Central District of the Baltimore Conference.

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS
TRUMAN, EISENHOWER, KENNEDY

Participants: Eric Bean
Richard Blocker
Karen Davis
Patricia Harris

Which of these presidents publicly professed a belief in God?

Answer: All three on numerous occasions.

What was the formal religious group to which these men identified?

Answer: Truman, Baptist; Eisenhower, Presbyterian; Kennedy, Roman Catholic

Lincoln once is quoted as stating: "We cannot escape history." Both its remembrance and its impact are with us.

The lives of these presidents were complemented with religious associations. Truman and Eisenhower were from midwestern Protestant heritages, while Kennedy was reared in the formalism of the Roman Catholic tradition. Each of their parents played a major role in teaching them Christian precepts, by word and by example.

Faith in God as revealed through Jesus Christ was considered a personal matter. Truman has stated that he read the Bible through twice before beginning his formal schooling. Eisenhower grew up in a tradition of non-baptism of children; and, tied with his military career where he frequently attended nondenominational services, he never formally united with the church until he became President of the United States. (After his nomination his political advisers pressed him to join a church, but he refused to do this for political purposes. It was not until 1953, some 12 days after his inauguration, that he joined the National Presbyterian Church.) Kennedy never held a religious service in the White House. This was his way of demonstrating separation of Church and State.

Each of these men had his own personality. Truman was a spunky, outspoken, and informal president. Eisenhower was a political greenhorn. He was in many ways a humble, modest, and dignified individual. Kennedy was youthful, brainy, witty, and is remembered perhaps more for what he championed than for what he achieved.

The most controversial was Truman. The one who ended public office more popular than he began it was Eisenhower. The one who proved that a Roman Catholic could be president was Kennedy.

All three men began the presidency, as had George Washington and the other presidents who preceded them, by affirming to execute the Office of President faithfully and to protect the Constitution with the closing phrase, "So help me, God,"

Following this oath, Truman raised the Bible to his lips. Eisenhower included in his inaugural speech a prayer he had personally written. While there were those who quibbled about this prayer, many Americans were drawn closer to the President because of this act of reaching out to his Maker for strength and inspiration.

Examples of religious significance in the lives of these men include:

Truman quotes:

"Of course the Sermon on the Mount is the greatest of all things in the Bible, a way of life, and maybe someday men will get to understand it as a real way of life."

"But I love the style of the Bible, the King James Version of the Bible. It is the finest and most stately brand of English there is."

Eisenhower's Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Benson, a Mormon elder, was chiefly responsible for making prayer a routine feature of the Cabinet meetings.

Adoption of the phrase "under God" in our pledge of allegiance to the flag occurred during the Eisenhower years. At a worship service Eisenhower attended at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in 1954, Dr. George Docherty, the pastor, delivered a sermon emphasizing the lack of a definitive aspect to our pledge to the flag. The pledge, he stated, could be one for any republic, including Russia, so he proposed the pledge to be rewritten: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

Almost simultaneously with the Congressional passage of the new pledge was a resolution establishing "a room, with facilities for prayer and meditation, for the use of members...." of Congress.

Eisenhower served in a period of spiritual renaissance for formal religion. In his view he saw Western Civilization locked in a life and death struggle with a godless system that demeans the dignity and worth of the individual and centers all power in the State. The West can win the struggle only by a <u>renewal</u> of the Christian faith within individuals.

Another example of Eisenhower's practicing religion was when he appeared on TV and asked all Americans to go to their churches

the following Sabbath Day and pray for the success of the Summit Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. He stated on a number of occasions that our system of government demanded a Supreme Being.

A great deal of affinity may be found between Eisenhower's admonitions and the historical conclusions of Toynbee. With some oversimplification one might state thusly: "There can be no unity of Mankind without the participation of God."

Kennedy professed to see clearly the distinction of his allegiance to the Constitution and to his Church. On a number of occasions he emphasized this. Religion for him was a private affair. He was opposed to an appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican.

Churches throughout our land mark the occasion, and often the pews, where these man shared in formal religious services.

Each of these men demonstrated that a person's conscience has a bearing on his public as well as his private life. None of these men could be considered pious, but all three created his own style of religious emphases. Perhaps for Truman it was his interest in formalizing relationships with the Vatican; for Eisenhower it was his church relationship which occurred after he became president; and for Kennedy it was his extreme efforts to demonstrate religious independence from the Roman Catholic Church.

Do we have a religious heritage from our presidents? The answer is an obvious "Yes" for Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy.

Presented by Dr. Richard D. Blocker, Director of Student Services and Programs, Arlington Public Schools; Teacher-Counsellor of Youth Council, Mt. Vernon Place United Methodist Church.

THE RELIGION OF PRESIDENTS
LYNDON JOHNSON, NIXON, FORD

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

On Thanksgiving Day in 1963 an unusual happening occurred at Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church a few days after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The new President Lyndon B. Johnson attended an interdenominational Thanksgiving Service at our Church in which about eight clergymen of various faiths participated. President Johnson was among the many worshippers who had gathered there to thank Almighty God for his manifold blessings to them during the past year. It was the only time to the best of my knowledge that a President of the United States ever attended a service at the Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, Washington, D.C. Needless to say, at the above-mentioned service prayers were offered for God's blessings for the new President Johnson and also for his welfare and safety.

Johnson was born near Stonewall, Texas on August 27, 1908. Both his father and his grandfather, Samuel Early Johnson, Junior and Senior, served in the State Legislature. In the early 1930's Johnson served as secretary to one of the U.S. Congressmen from Texas. In 1937 he won a Congressional seat in a special election and remained in the House of Representatives until 1949. During World War II as a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy he won a Silver Star.

In 1948 he won in an election for the U.S. Senate in a close contest and served in that body until he ran for Vice President and was elected on the ticket with President Kennedy in 1960. During the 1950's he served first as Minority Party Leader in the Senate and later as Majority Party Leader.

President Johnson made a practice of attending a greater variety of churches than any other President. Often it seemed as though, in the principal churches of Washington, D.C., any minister or priest might find the President sitting in the congregation on almost any Sunday. This included the Roman Catholic Church, of which his younger daughter, Luci, became a communicant prior to her marriage to Patrick Nugent.

Johnson's mother was a Baptist but from his youth he belonged to the International Convention of Christian Churches. His small home church was the First Christian Church, Johnson City, Texas. The name by which the denomination is most simply known today, the Christian Church, is appropriate to its broad ecumenical spirit, which is one reason its faithful member, "L. B. J.," moved so easily to worship in a variety of churches.

Claudia Alta Taylor Johnson, affectionately known to her family and to the public as "Lady Bird," is an Episcopalian and was one reason why President Johnson worshipped so often in that church. Both of his daughters, Lynda and Luci, were Episcopalians until Luci embraced Catholicism just before her marriage. During the first year of his Presidency, he seemed to divide his time equally in attending St. Mark's

Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill and the National City Christian Church on Thomas Circle, both in Washington, D.C. Later on he seemed to give preference to the National Christian Church, attending that Church rather regularly.

President Johnson had on occasions a rough time in his church-going. An Episcopal clergyman, whom we might call a strict constructionist, rebuked him for receiving the Communion at St. Mark's Episcopal Church because he was not confirmed as an Episcopalian. This is not a trivial question but it has discretionary flexibility. The rector of St. Mark's and the Bishop of Washington rushed to the President's defense and welcomed him as a communicant.

On November 12, 1967 at Williamsburg, Virginia, the Johnsons sat in the front pew of Bruton Parish Episcopal Church. The Rev. Dr. Cotesworth Pinckney Lewis digressed from his sermon to speak of doubts of our Vietnam policy and said, "...we wonder if some logical, straightforward explanation might be given..." President Johnson had just completed a five-thousand mile tour ostensibly giving such an explanation. He shook hands with the rector and said "Thank you," as they left the church and "Lady Bird" murmered, "Wonderful choir." In Congress the rector was denounced for making a captive audience of the President. The Bishop of Southern Virginia said no offense was intended and defended the right of the rector to speak according to his conscience as an individual. The President conceded, "Going to church has become a problem." Whether a sermon is construed as sympathetic or critical, repercussions might follow in the press.

For the first time in memory regular weekly prayer sessions of the White House staff were held at 7:30 a.m. each Thursday in the White House starting in 1966.

President Johnson is quoted as having said "Most Americans appreciate and respect the influence religious beliefs have had as a motivating force in our traditional devotion to individual liberty and dignity since colonial times." "No less important has been religion's role as a part of the mortar unifying one of the world's most diverse populations into one of history's most unified nations." President Johnson related: "I have often said we never stand as tall as when we go to our knees." "While our Constitution wisely separates State and church, it does not separate men of State from religion." "I have long known - and never more than since November, 1963 - what strength comes from devotion, reverence and prayer."

President Johnson's favorite passages of scripture are: Isaiah 1:18 and Psalm 91.

In his public speeches and at gatherings such as the Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfasts he frequently appealed to the Almighty for guidance and also requested his fellow countrymen to remember their country and him in their private prayers. He welcomed the assurance that people were praying for the welfare of their country and for him by

saying: "Prayer has helped me to bear the burdens of the Presidency, which are too great to be borne by anyone alone." He also said on one occasion, "No man could live in the house where I live and work at the desk where I work without needing and seeking the support of earnest and frequent prayer."

In May, 1967 the New York Times ran a story that had been rumored for some time. On June 29, 1966, allegedly Luci Johnson Nugent had found her father glum and lonely in the evening. He said to her, "Your daddy may go down in history as having started World War III." He went on to say that he had ordered that day the first bombing near the centers of Hanoi and Haiphong in North Vietnam. Luci said that when she was worried and depressed she visited "my little monks." President Johnson ordered a car and went with her to St. Dominic's Church, around midnight, where they prayed silently together. He grumbled that the cushionless floor was hard on his knees. The next morning, World War III having not occurred, Luci said that her "little monks" usually came through. The Times emphasized this story not as a reflection of dread on Johnson's part, but of the burdens of decision he had to make and the comfort of an affectionate daughter.

Johnson was the first President to meet officially with a Pope on the occasion of Pope Paul VI's unprecedented visit to the United States and the United Nations. Even in the new spirit of religious good feeling, it was a less complicated matter for a Protestant President than it might have been for President Kennedy. President Johnson came to New York for the meeting on as informal basis as possible.

In February, 1964, at the 12th Annual Prayer Breakfast at the White House, President Johnson proposed what he must have felt sure would be a popular idea, only to find himself in trouble. Observing that Washington was a city full of memorials to statesmen and soldiers, he thought it would be a fine thing to have a "fitting memorial to the God who made us all." He suggested that this should be a house of prayer open to persons of all faiths at all times. The government, of course, could not build it; a fund should be raised by private groups and individuals. At best it was considered a theologically naive proposal. It was pointed out that a great number of open churches already existed, several called "National" because of their location in the Capital City. A memorial to some generalized God, it was argued by some religious journals, would be meaningless and superfluous to any persons with any sort of religious affiliation, and no one else would want to use it. The proposal vanished into the crypt of buried ideas.

Early in his administration, President Johnson proclaimed as his goal "The Great Society," its aims including progress in civil rights and the "war on poverty." Escalation of the war in Vietnam, however, increasingly interfered with domestic programs and became a divisive issue in American life. In spite of more extensive legislation for civil rights than any other administration had achieved, President Johnson found racial strife increasing in American cities.

Late in 1967 he was challenged directly on his Vietnam policy when Senator Eugene McCarthy announced that he would seek the Presidential

nomination of the Democratic Party. Early in 1968 Senator Robert Kennedy announced that he too would seek this nomination. In response to all of these political developments, and in the hope of raising himself above political concerns in the effort to bring about negotiations for peace in Vietnam, President Johnson on March 31, 1968 announced he wouldn't accept renomination for the Presidency.

RICHARD M. NIXON

Richard Nixon's mother, Hannah Milhous, came in an early wave of emigrants from Butlerville, Indiana to Whittier, California with her parents in the late 1880's, because it epitomized the tranquility of Quaker living. Nixon's father, Frank, came to Whittier much later. Frank and Hannah met in February 1908 and were married four months later; Frank became a Quaker. Hannah and Frank had five sons, one of whom was Richard who was born in 1913 in Yorba Linda, a farming village thirty miles inland from Los Angeles, California.

Frank's forbears were tough, strait-laced, Bible-pounding Methodists but he later became a Quaker. Hannah's family were devout and gentle Quakers. Her family while living in Indiana prior to their moving to California tolerated violence only to save bodies and souls, mainly those of runaway slaves. The Milhouses and other Quakers while in Indiana operated one of the most effective railroad operations in the nation to rescue slaves.

Frank and Hannah moved with their children from Yorba Linda in 1922 to Whittier, a town of tranquility and Quaker purity. Much of Richard's early life centered at the East Whittier Friends Meeting House - the Quaker Church - where he and his family attended one form of service or another four times each Sunday and several times each week. Richard played the organ at the Meeting House and taught Sunday School. The Nixon family got up early each morning and said their prayers and Bible verses together.

Richard's seventh grade teacher impressed upon him "the importance of fighting hard all the time and working hard all the time." His high school principal says that Richard was a self-starter and a fighting Quaker. Merton G. Wray, later a Municipal Court Judge in Whittier but once a schoolmate of Richard in high school and college said" "I cannot reconcile his massive retaliation policy in politics and as a public official with what I understand of the Quaker philosophy and their fellowship of reconciliation."

In the middle 1920's Richard's father became increasingly livid over each new disclosure in the Teapot Dome Scandal in the sensational theft of government oil reserves through the connivance of principals in President Harding's Administration. Richard, 12 years old at that time - declared then and there - "I will be an old-fashioned kind of lawyer who can't be bought."

Richard Nixon was seventeen when he entered Whittier College, a small Quaker institution with exacting standards. Dr. Paul S. Smith, then Whittier professor of history and politics and later President of that College states: "As a young student Richard had the uncommon capacity to brush aside the facades of a subject and get to the heart of it. He always completed on half a page what would take a normal 'A' student two pages." In his senior year Nixon was elected President of the student body at Whittier.

Nixon got a full tuition scholarship in the Duke University in 1934 during the depression and demonstrated his legal ability by maintaining his scholarship for the entire three years. In 1937 Nixon stood third in his law school graduating class at Duke.

On May 3, 1937 Dean H. Claude Horack of Duke wrote J. Edgar Hoover: "Sometime ago you suggested that I might refer to you any exceptional young man who has an interest in the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I have such a young man in mind who will graduate in June - Richard Nixon - one of the finest young men, both in character and ability, that I have ever had the opportunity of having in my classes. He is a superior student, alert, aggressive, a fine speaker and one who can do an exceptionally good piece of research when called upon to do so." In June 1937 when the FBI job had not materialized, Nixon returned to his home town in California and crammed five months of detailed California law into two months of study. He did it successfully. Four months later he wrote Dean Horack that he had taken the FBI examination. "They have been investigating my character since that time; but unless my present prospects fall through, I shall not accept the job even if it is offered to me."

Long afterwards when Nixon became Vice President, he asked J. Edgar Hoover why the FBI never came through with the job. The explanation was simply this: "An unexpected appropriation cut forced the Bureau to stop hiring."

Nixon returned to Whitter, California in 1937 and was successful in practicing law there. In 1942 he joined the Navy although fighting was against his Quaker and family upbringing. He joined the Navy as a First Lieutenant, Junior Grade; a year later he was promoted to a full Lieutenant and, in October 1945, he became a Lieutenant Commander.

He had a meteoric rise in politics; just after he came out of the Navy at the age of 32 in 1946, he defeated Jerry Voorhis, who had been Congressman for several years from the 12th Congressional District of California, by a margin of about sixteen thousand votes. In 1950 he defeated Helen Gahagan Douglas in a race for a seat in the United States Senate by a 680,000 margin. In this race he was charged by the Democratic Party with reprehensible conduct and campaign tactics and thus he created a decided dislike and mistrust on the part of the Democratic Party.

In July 1952 Eisenhower was elected President and Nixon Vice President of the United States, and were again reelected to these positions in 1956. In 1960 Nixon lost the race for U.S. President to John F. Kennedy by the narrowest of margins of any man who had run for the Presidency - 120,000 votes. In 1962 he lost in a race for Governor of California to Governor Edmund G. Brown.

From 1963 to 1968 he was a member of the prestigious law firm in New York City headed by Mudge, Stern, Baldwin and Todd. Shortly thereafter the name was changed to Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie and Alexander and the name of John Mitchell was later added to the firm which had grown to 105 lawyers.

Although his defeat by Governor Brown in 1962 was considered by political commentators to be the "Political Obituary of Richard Nixon," a miraculous thing happened and Nixon rose from his political grave. He came back to be elected President of the United States in 1968 and was reelected as President in 1972 by a landslide. On August 8, 1974, faced with an almost certain impeachment, he resigned from his office as President of the United States and was succeeded by the then Vice President Gerald R. Ford.

During four of the years Nixon was Vice President, he and his family attended the Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church in Wesley Heights near American University. Dr. Edward G. Latch, Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives was pastor of that Church at that time. When Tricia Nixon was married, Dr. Latch performed the ceremony. Dr. Latch gave the closing prayer at the Republican National Convention in 1960 when Nixon was nominated for the Presidency the first time.

Just after the inauguration in 1969 of Nixon as President, he inaugurated what he hoped would become a White House institution. On January 26, 1969 the first worship service was held on a Sunday morning in the White House. Most of those present in this first congregation and those that followed were from the ranks of Government - Senators, Congressmen, Supreme Court Justices, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, White House staff members, and Cabinet Members fresh on their jobs.

President Nixon stated: "When I was elected to the highest office in the land, I decided that I wanted to do something to encourage attendance at religious services and to emphasize this country's basic faith in a Supreme Being. It seemed to me that one way of achieving this was to set a good example. What better example could there be than to bring the worship service with all of its solemn meaning, right into the White House." To avoid any suggestion of favoritism, he chose ministers of various faiths and from different regions of this country. During the first two years of his administration, 1969 and 1970, White House Worship Services were held twenty-six times. Among some of the clergymen speaking at these services were: Rev. Dr. Billy Graham (2), His Eminence Terence Cardinal Cooke, Dr. D. Elton Trueblood, Dr. Louis

Finkelstein, Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale (2), Rev. Dr. Richard C. Halverson and Rev. Dr. Edward G. Latch, both from Washington, D.C., His Eminence John Cardinal Krol and the Right Rev. Monsignor Thomas J. McCarthy. Many choirs, college choral groups and other musical groups have sung in these worship services.

When President Nixon was away from Washington, D.C., he attended worship services in the areas where he visited. Many of you are well aware that among the young men the Pugh Bible Class of our Church has financially assisted to obtain theological training for the ministry were Raymond, William and Warren Firth, all of whom are brothers and members of our Church. Raymond Firth is my brother-in-law and has recently been the pastor of the United Methodist Church in Capistrano Beach, California, which is about three miles from San Clemente, California, the home of President Nixon. About three or four years ago during the winter season, Dr. Firth received word that President Nixon wanted to attend his church the following Sunday.

When this Sunday occurred there was a power shortage in the area and there was no electric current to supply lighting or heating for the church nor to furnish power for the organ. Needless to say Dr. Firth was in a dilemma as to what to do. He called the U.S. Secret Service at San Clemente, which worked quickly to have the power restored at the church. About five minutes before the service was to begin the power was restored and the church service was conducted in a very orderly and worshipful manner. The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding prevailed after the service was concluded when Dr. Firth and his wife pleasantly conversed with President Nixon, his wife and family.

GERALD R. FORD

Gerald R. Ford was a child of a broken marriage. He was born Leslie Lynch King on July 14, 1913 to Dorothy Gardner and Leslie King. That marriage foundered almost from the start; they were divorced in 1915 and Mrs. King returned to her parents' home in Grand Rapids, Michigan with her young son. Dorothy King, attractive and in her early twenties, caught the eye of a young bachelor, Gerald R. Ford, at an Episcopal social and they were soon married. Formal adoption papers were taken out for her young son, who was renamed Gerald R. Ford, Jr. He was raised by a devoted and wise stepfather.

Calvinist emigres from the Netherlands pushed into Michigan, including Grand Rapids, in the middle 1800's with a religious fervor and quickly became the primary ethnic influence throughout Western Michigan. The Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church, the principal denominations of the Dutch, became the dominant faiths in that region. Dutch Calvinists frowned on drinking, card playing, social dancing, going to the movies and work or play on the Sabbath.

Jerry Ford escaped the rigors of Calvinist upbringing that was the lot of many of his friends and acquaintances. His stepfather, although not "churchy" in the way of his Dutch neighbors and customers, believed in the Golden Rule and helping other people. From his earliest days, Ford remembers his mother and stepfather being active in community life and projects centering around the Grace Episcopal to which they belonged. Both were fund raisers for charity, for Boy Scouts, and for the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra. One of Ford, Sr.'s pet ventures was to organize programs to assist underprivileged youth.

One day Ford, Jr. while working to make ends meet in his family was startled by a man approaching him and announcing that he was Ford, Jr.'s father. This man stated that he had been divorced from Ford's mother. Ford, Jr., in his 17th year at the time, did not know until then that his mother had been divorced when he was a baby and that he had been adopted by Ford, Sr. Mother and Dad and Ford, Jr. talked late in their home after the young man got home. Jerry, Jr. did a lot of growing up that night.

Ford, Jr. was graduated from the University of Michigan in 1935 with a "B" average and a liberal arts degree. He later entered Yale and finished in the top third of his Yale Law School class.

In 1948 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Fifth Congressional District of Michigan and continued to be elected from that District until 1973. On January 4, 1965 he was chosen as the New Minority Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives. With the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1973, President Nixon nominated Gerald Ford for Vice President of the United States, and this nomination was later confirmed by the U.S. Senate on December 6, 1973. Following the resignation of President Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford became President of the United States on August 9, 1974.

From childhood President Ford belonged to the Episcopal Church and took an active part with his mother and stepfather at Grace Episcopal at Grand Rapids. President and Mrs. Ford were married in that Church and have belonged to the Immanuel-Church-on-the-Hill Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia for more than 25 years. On occasion they also attend the St. John's Episcopal Church, which is located just about a block from the White House.

In addition to their formal church activities, the Ford family also relies on their close friend, Billy Zeoli of Grand Rapids, Michigan for spiritual guidance. Billy Zeoli is the energetic President of a company named Gospel Films in Muskegon, Michigan. He is a graduate of Wheaton College, minister of the Independent Presbyterian Church and a former Youth for Christ Director. According to one report, Gerald Ford, while House Minority Leader, felt an intensity of faith and "accepted Christ" during a service Zeoli conducted before the Washington Redskins-Dallas Cowboys game in 1971. It is clear that Gerald Ford has found in Billy Zeoli his personal chaplain. President Ford wrote to Billy Zeoli: "Because I have

trusted Christ to be my Savior, my life is His." When Mrs. Ford had to have surgery for breast cancer, Billy Zeoli was with the Ford family giving comfort and counsel.

When President Ford was sworn into office, he rested his hand on a verse from the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 3:5-6). "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." While a Congressman, President Ford participated in many intimate prayer meetings with Melvin Laird, Albert Quie of Minnesota, John Rhodes of Arizona and several other Congressmen who felt the need of attending these prayer groups.

President Ford made the following remarks at the 23rd Annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. on January 30, 1975: "On the day that I suddenly became President of the United States, after all the guests had gone, I walked through some of the empty rooms on the first floor of the White House and stopped by the marble mantle in the dining room to read the words carved in it - words that were a prayer of the First President who ever occupied the White House: 'I pray to Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it.'" President Ford then stated at this National Prayer Breakfast: "My own prayer is for God's continued guidance for our country and all its people whose servants we in government strive to be."

Michael Ford, the President's son, is currently attending the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Wenham, Massachusetts. In January 1974 when his father had been confirmed by Congress as Vice President of the United States, Michael Ford offered a prayer at a prayer breakfast in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which also seems an appropriate prayer to offer on behalf of Gerald Ford as the President of the United States. Part of this prayer is as follows: "We collectively lift up to You one of Your children, Gerald Ford, in his position of leadership in this great nation. You have called him to a tremendously demanding task in a turbulent and critical time in history. It is our prayer, Lord, that You would bless him with discernment and good judgment as he seeks to carry out the many responsibilities laid before him. Grant him courage to trust in You always and not in the things of the world. Work in his heart the desire to seek Your guidance and direction in all things. We humbly pray that Your Holy Spirit, who reveals all truth and who gives all life, may dwell in him and also in us, that together as Your faithful children we may walk in Your ways and glorify Your name. We ask this in Christ's name and for His sake. Amen."

In summary each of our last three Presidents were former Congressmen and one of them became the House Minority Leader. Two of them became Senators and one of them became the Senate Majority Leader. All three of them were Lieutenant Commanders for the U.S. Navy in World War II. All three of them served as Vice President of the United States just

before they became Presidents of the United States. Each of them was raised in homes where there were profound spiritual beliefs. Each of them had a deeply rooted faith in God. Somewhere along the line in some instances some of these men deviated from their religious principles and convictions.

However, each and every one of us should pray for the office of the Presidency and Vice Presidency and the other offices of other leaders of our country and also pray that God will direct and bless them. We ask our Lord, Jesus Christ, that they may have a strength and wisdom beyond their own.

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Presented by Mr. Forrest F. Burgess, Chairman of the Evangelism Commission and the Ushering Committee; former Chairman of the Administrative Board; and formerly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

PRAYER ROOMS IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOLS

A member of Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church and of the Forum Class, Mrs. Miriam Teaff, now residing in Dover, Delaware, played a role in the Congressional Prayer accent during the Eisenhower Administration. A resolution establishing a room in the United States Capitol with facilities for prayer and meditation for the use of Members of Congress was passed by both the House and the Senate by May 4, 1954, though first introduced in the House February 12, 1953.

It was in 1951, after fracturing a heel and being on crutches for nine months, that Mrs. Teaff became a regular visitor in the gallery of the U. S. Senate, as was suggested by Glenn Clark's "Camps Farthest Out Prayer Group," all the better to pray for our legislators to do God's Will, even selecting special legislators for prayer and writing to tell them so.

In the Spring of 1952 Glenn Harding of Koinonia suggested that Mrs. Teaff personally deliver a letter from Frank Laubach in India, to our U. S. Representatives and Senators, concerning legislation that had been introduced earlier on financial aid to India and the Far East owing to the hunger, sickness, and great need there.

With the help of two persons, also Methodists, and Representative Ruth St. George, President of the Senate and House Prayer Group, the Laubach letter was distributed; Senator Hubert Humphrey putting the letter in the Congressional Record soon after Miriam delivered it to him. The foreign aid bill passed in the Senate by one vote, as it did in the House with a few votes to spare.

Representative Brooks Hays of Arkansas and Senator A. S. Mike Monroney of Oklahoma introduced bills early in 1953 (House - February 12, and Senate February 13) to establish a Prayer Room in the Nation's Capitol, and the measures passed both Houses shortly thereafter (House - July 17, 1953, Senate - May 4, 1954).

In March 1955 the Prayer Room was '"completed and open for use" by the Members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives. Although its use is restricted to Members of Congress, Mrs. Teaff and her grandchildren have been admitted many times, and her roses from her "Rainbow Home" where she formerly resided in Washington, D. C., have graced its altar.

In 1957 she wrote to the State Governors introducing the idea of a Prayer Room in the State Capitols, with three resolutions being passed that year, she was informed. When one of these failed to materialize her letters were followed by personal visits in the 1960's. She has to date visited all fifty state capitols including Hawaii and Alaska, seeing Governors and Statesmen on this Prayer Room Project.

Twenty Governors have promised or have had resolutions passed to establish a Prayer Room. Prayer Rooms now known to have been established in State Capitols include Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, Kansas, Montana, Indiana, Alabama, with Alaska and Hawaii and others promised.

As a Bicentennial Project, this year Mrs. Teaff is visiting the Capitols of the thirteen original states, presenting each Governor yet without a Prayer Room with a large framed picture in color of the Prayer Room in our Nation's Capitol. Senator William Roth of Delaware is making the pictures available for her mission. Miriam asks for our prayers in this endeavor, and says "Was prayer and a quiet place of retreat ever more needed. Your prayers will help much, I know."

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